

52
OBSERVATIONS,
OCCASIONED BY THE ATTEMPTS MADE IN ENGLAND
TO EFFECT THE ABOLITION
OF THE
SLAVE TRADE;

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SHEWING,
The Manner in which NEGROES are treated
IN THE BRITISH COLONIES
IN THE
WEST - INDIES;
AND ALSO,

SOME PARTICULAR REMARKS ON A LETTER
ADDRESSED TO THE
TREASURER OF THE SOCIETY FOR EFFECTING
SUCH ABOLITION,

FROM THE
REV. ROBERT BOUCHER NICHOLLS,
DEAN OF MIDDLEHAM,
BY G. FRANKLYN, Esq. K

*And why beboldst thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not
"the beam that is in thine own eye?"
Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye
"and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?"*

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T H E

PUBLISHER TO THE READER.

THE following pamphlet was originally printed in Jamaica; and the writer of it not being a candidate for the prize of literary fame, nor intending any thing more than to present the public with a fair account of the general treatment of the Negroes in that and the other British Sugar Colonies, did not think it necessary to affix his name; yet, having no desire to conceal it, he avowed himself, and was well known, and declared by the printer to be the author.

Several copies of it were transmitted, not only by many of the principal planters to their friends and correspondents, but by the Honourable the Committee of both Houses of Legislature of the Island, appointed to correspond with their agent Stephen Fuller, Esq.

to distribute to such gentlemen in England, to whom he might suppose the matters of information it contains might be useful.

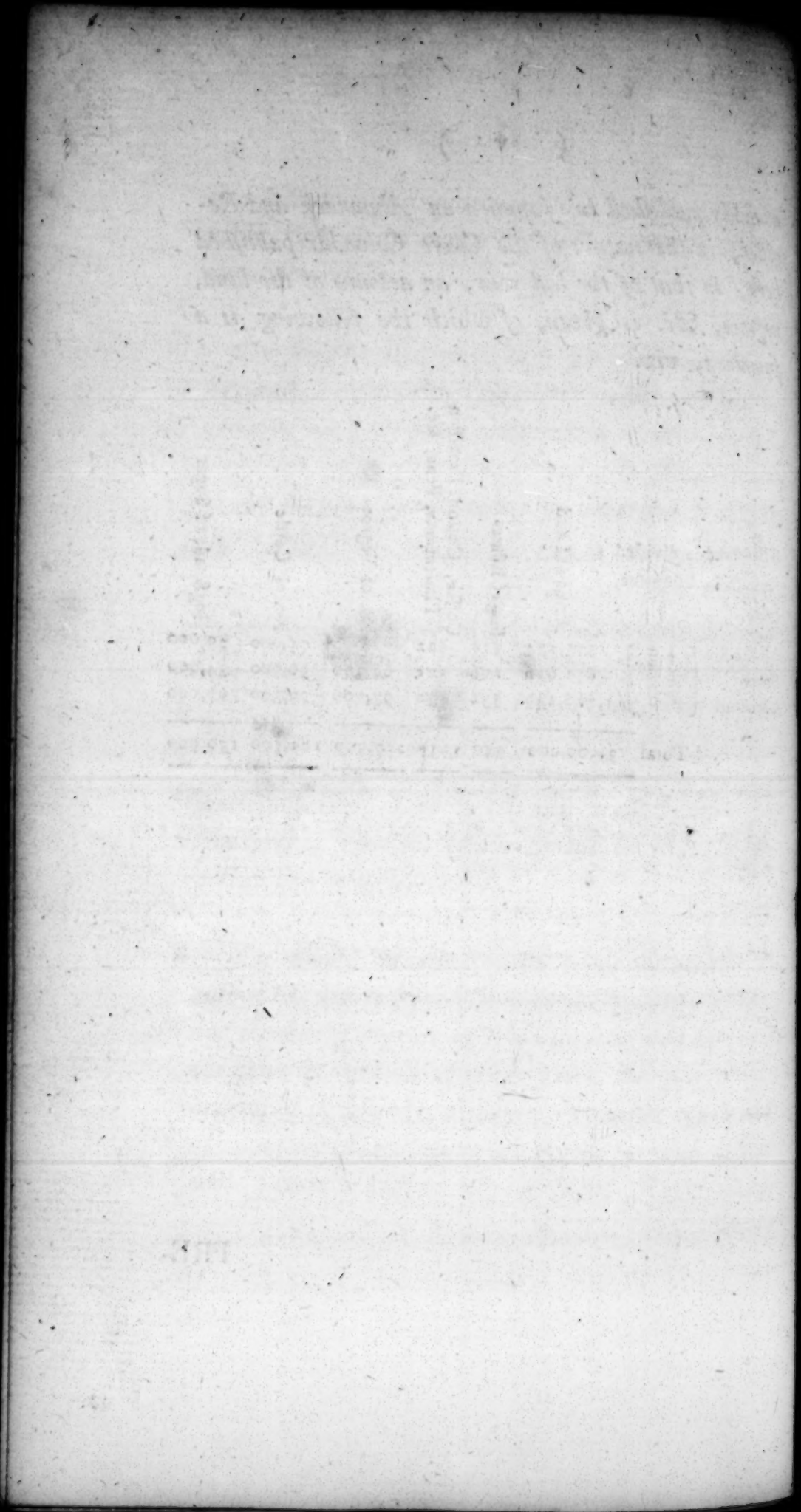
The sanction thus given to it by gentlemen so perfectly conversant in the subject it treats of, and acquainted with the facts contained in it, will surely be considered, by every reasonable and dispassionate person, as an indisputable testimony to the truth of the author's assertions.

The satisfaction which several gentlemen here have been pleased to say they received from it, and the many enquiries after it, has induced the author to consent to the reprinting it with his name, in hopes that it may assist in disabusing the public, which has been most shamefully imposed on by the misrepresentation of persons grossly ignorant of the British West-India properties and proprietors.

If it should be asked, from what authorities the author has taken his account of the quantity of land, and number of negroes, in Jamaica, it may be answered, the quantity of land appears from the geographical account of the island, which is 150 miles long, and, upon an average, about 40 broad, as well as from Mr. LONG's History of the Island. There is also

annually published in Jamaica an Almanack and Register, in the nature of the Court Calendar published here; in that of the last year, an account of the land, negroes, &c. is given, of which the following is a summary, viz.

The Island is divided into three Counties, viz.		Acres of Land	Sugar Estates	Coffe, Cotton, Provision Plantations, Pens, &c.	No. of Negroes	No. of Cattle	Hogheads of Sugar
Middlesex	{ which contain }	305,235	312	922	92,000	75,000	29,000
Surry		672,616	296	505	68,300	30,000	34,000
Cornwall		1,522,149	332	532	97,000	76,500	67,000
Total		3,500,000	940	1959	257,300	181,500	130,900



P R E F A C E.

THE author of the following pages having learned, from magazines, newspapers, and reviews, sent from England to this island, some of the many calumnies, industriously propagated, against the proprietors of negro slaves in the West Indies; and the attempts made to persuade men of humanity and religion, to exert their endeavours to procure a law to abolish slavery and the slave trade, as offensive to both; thought it might be useful to lay before the public the real situation and treatment of slaves in the sugar colonies; an undertaking which a long and intimate knowledge of, and residence, at different times, in most of the islands, from Barbadoes to Jamaica, particularly qualifies him for.

The account he has given, he is satisfied, will be acknowledged by every person, acquainted with the West Indies, to be a less favourable representation of the negroes' situation than the fact would justify; but as he speaks only of general treatment, he has avoided mentioning the attention which particular people shew their slaves.

slaves. It is now not uncommon, on sugar estates, in several of the islands, to have a kind of marquees, or tents pitched, or in their stead, thatched sheds erected, in different places, on the land for the negroes, in case of hasty and violent showers, to retire to, and also to employ two or three boys, with mules, to bring grass, to prevent the gang having any thing to do after they leave the field; which is considered injurious to their healths, as they are often detained, in wet weather, till the whole gang are collected together, to be called over.

He has confined himself also to the situation of the slaves in the islands. It never was supposed they were treated with more tenderness on the continent; but it was because he treated of the negroes in the islands; that he has not urged in proof of their satisfaction in their present station, the very small comparative numbers which could be induced to quit their masters in Virginia and the Carolinas, when freedom, and every other temptation was held out to them, which could be thought of, for the purpose of enticing them to run-away.

It was the author's original intention to have done no more than point out the extreme improbability, not to say absurdity, of the accounts given of the planters cruelty to their slaves; but observing that not only individuals had united themselves upon this occasion,
but

but that the two Universities, and other respectable public societies, had addressed the House of Commons to abolish the slave trade, as inconsistent with the Christian religion; he could not help respecting such authorities; and having doubts how far he might venture to say any thing in favour of a commerce so generally condemned, he thought it incumbent on him first to search the scriptures, to learn whether slavery was inconsistent with the revealed will of the Deity. The result of his enquiry was perfectly satisfactory to himself; and he thought it but right to point out some few of the many passages to be found in the sacred volumes, which justify that commerce. Since the following observations went to the press, the author has the great satisfaction to find, that he might have pursued his original plan without any injury to the cause he has endeavoured to support, as he has seen a pamphlet by the Reverend Mr. Harris, of Liverpool, who has so clearly proved, from the scriptures, that slavery is neither contrary to the law nor the gospel, that it is scarcely possible for the most conscientious believer, who reads that tract, to doubt in future, whether the man servant and the maid servant is not as much a man's property as "*his ox or his ass, or any thing that is his.*"

To a British subject, the word *slavery* conveys an idea in some measure different from what it raises in the minds of most other people in Europe. But it is to be
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doubted,

doubted, if the idea entertained by my countrymen can be easily explained by many of them. Every submission to the will of another, every degree of servitude, every restraint upon a man's personal liberty, is, in some sort, a species of slavery.—If this observation is just, which is the nation in Europe, where, in some instances, personal liberty is restrained by severer laws than in England?

If by liberty is understood, *people being governed by laws to which they have given their assent by themselves, or their representatives*, without entering into an enquiry, whether the bulk of the people in England have, or have not that privilege, it may surely be truly said, the inhabitants of these colonies do not possess it to any great extent; and if their property is to be taken from them, or much lessened in value, which it certainly will be, if the present attempt should succeed, either in the whole, or in part, they will themselves become slaves, in the stead of those who are now called so.

About the time of Lord Mansfield's determination in the case of Mr. Stuart's negro, the imaginations of the populace of London were as much heated by the cry of *liberty*, as they were a few years ago by the name of the *Protestant religion*, and as those of the people in Great Britain seem in general to be now with the ideas
of

of *humanity*; the exercise of which virtue they seem more earnest to recommend to the inhabitants of the East and West Indies, than to practise it themselves.

They have already, about the time of the decision above-mentioned, tried the effects of emancipating the negroes at home, and *they found it would not do*. From that to the present time the number of slaves, who have attended their masters and their families from North-America and the islands to Great Britain and Ireland, cannot have been much less than 40,000; particularly, taking into the account, the many families who have been forced from the Southern colonies of the American continent by the late unhappy contest. Notwithstanding the planters had every right to suppose they were authorised by the laws of Great Britain, as well as those of the colonies, to consider those people as their property; and that they had a right to their services in Europe, or to send, or accompany them back to the colonies, as they judged proper, they found themselves mistaken; and that it was permitted to debauch their slaves, to encourage or entice them to run away, with impunity. The ideas of liberty, the charms of novelty, and an ignorance of the country they had got to, where they found themselves upon a perfect equality, at least, with the inferior white people, could not fail of having pernicious effects upon their minds, and

great numbers ran away from their masters. They in general plunged into vice and debauchery, and many of them who were desirous of returning to their masters and mistresses, were refused to be received. The whole of those thus lost to their owners, and as to every useful purpose to the community, cannot have been less in number than from 15,000 to 20,000.—As most of them were prime, young, seasoned, or Creole slaves, the loss to their owners, the planters, has not been less than from 1,000,000 to 1,200,000*l.* sterling: a large sum to be sacrificed to the mere names of *liberty and humanity!* What has been the result of thus extending *the blessings of liberty* to so many wretched slaves? Let any body shew scarce a single instance of any one of these people being in so happy a situation as they were before. The greater part, it is known, died miserably in a very short time. No parish was willing to receive them, so that the survivors, after begging about the streets of London, and suffering all those evils and inconveniencies consequent on idleness and poverty, famine, disease, and the inclemency of the weather, attracted the attention of the public, and Government was prevailed upon to undertake the transportation of them to the country from whence they, or their ancestors, had been ravished *by the wicked traders* of London, Liverpool, and Bristol. They were there to be made perfectly happy: they were there to possess “land and beeves;” instruments of husbandry

husbandry, tools, and other necessaries for building. Grain, and the seeds of all sorts of vegetables, proper to the climate, were furnished them; and all that was necessary for their future happiness was, that they should *work*. But so far, it seems, were these ungrateful people from thankfully profiting by the kind disposition of the public towards them, that we are told Mr. Glanville Sharp, the great promoter of all these *mistaken* acts of *humanity*, found it necessary to distribute hand-bills about the town, to request gentlemen not to relieve their distresses, in order to force them to go to Portsmouth, where the ships were to take them in to carry them to Africa. It is confidently said here, that very few hundreds were prevailed on to proceed to that place, great part of whom ran away when they got there; of those who embarked many died of disease or chagrin, before they arrived, and many more afterwards; and of the few who remained alive, there was scarce one who did not express his wish to quit his new abode, *his estate and his liberty*, even although it should be to return to his pristine slavery, in the sugar colonies. This is, however, the account given us by the master of one of the transport ships, who came from Sierra Leon, to seek a freight to London, after having landed some of these people at their place of destination.

Equal unhappiness would be the lot of the slaves in the islands, if they were set free:—what could they do to obtain a livelihood? To suppose they would hire themselves out to work, can only enter into the imagination of those who do not know the people, or the country. What has so lately passed in England, is surely sufficient to shew, that there can be no idea, they will, any of them, wish to return to their own country. Thousands of negroes have been made free by their masters in the colonies; and it may, with truth, be asserted, that, notwithstanding many of them were very capable of paying for a passage to any part of Africa they thought proper, scarce a single instance can be produced of any one of them desiring to return to the place of his nativity.*

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* A negro woman was imported amongst a cargo of slaves from Anamaboa about the year 1772. In the latter end of the year 1773, her brother, named Quashy, who is well known to all the masters of ships in the Gold Coast trade, as a kind of broker or interpreter, and who has, more than once, sailed in a ship from the coast to the islands, and home by the way of London, hearing his sister was in Jamaica, took his passage in a ship bound from the coast to this island, for the sole purpose of endeavouring to discover her, obtain her freedom, and carry her back to her own country: he brought money with him for that purpose; and was lucky enough to find her out, she having been sold to a Miss Tindal, of Kingston. He purchased her from Miss Tindal; and she was prevailed upon, though with great

The present attempt to cram liberty down the throats of people who are incapable of digesting it, can, with propriety,

great reluctance, to embark with him for England, in the *Nancy*, Capt. Brown, the latter end of 1773. Early in 1774, they took their passage from London to Anamaboa, in a snow belonging to John Shoolbred, Esq. called the *Peggy*, Robert Martin, master, who landed them safe at that port. During Capt. Martin's stay there, he had frequent opportunities of seeing this woman, who, after having been home a short time, grew perfectly tired and disgusted with the place, and repeatedly requested Capt. Martin to carry her back to Jamaica, and would even have returned as a slave, rather than stay where she was; but Capt. Martin dared not comply with her desire, as the laws of the country do not permit the carrying away a free woman, or another's slave, without the master's permission.

This anecdote was communicated to the author by Robert Hibbert, Esq. of this town, who was personally acquainted with the former part of this history, from a servant of his being husband to the woman while she was in Jamaica; and the other part of it he had from Capt. Martin, on his return from Anamaboa to Jamaica, who told it, at his table, in the presence of the negro, the husband, without having any previous knowledge of the connection between the parties.

The attestation of a man of Mr. Hibbert's reputation to such a fact, is surely of more authority than the journals, or pretended journals, of twenty such surgeons of Guinea ships, as are said to have sailed from New York sixty or seventy years ago.

What

propriety, be resembled to nothing so well as to the account of poor Gulliver, when he was carried out of his little cabinet to the top of the house, by the Brobdignag monkey.

The writers on the laws of nature and nations are agreed, that the protection, security, and other advantages a man receives from living in society, gives every community a right to abridge the individual of such portion of his natural liberty, as may be conducive to the general welfare of the whole : but surely none can have a right to make such laws, but the members of the community who are to be governed by them. Is it more just or reasonable for the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, the Magistrates of London, Edinburgh, or Dublin, to interfere in the making laws for the government of the slaves or servants of the planters in the West Indies, than it would be for the Council and Assembly of Jamaica, or any other of these colonies, to interfere

What can be a stronger proof of the truth of what is said above, of the reluctance of negroes to return from the West Indies to their own country, than that a young woman, who had been from it so short a time, and had so favourable an opportunity of returning to it under the protection of a brother, who shewed such an affection for her, should not only shew a reluctance to return home, and enjoy her *liberty*, but should express so strong a desire to leave Africa again, and return to Jamaica, and to *slavery*?

interfere in framing or altering the statutes for directing the conduct of the members of the two Universities, or making the laws for the government of the *freemen*, or any other persons *who are not considered as freemen* of London, or any other corporation in Great Britain or Ireland; which the planters have as much a right to call *their Universities* and *their Corporation*, as the Dean of Middleham, the society in the Old Jewry, or any other equally respectable personages, have to call these colonies, *their islands*?

It may, perhaps, be a question not easily answered, whether any society, or community, can, with justice, make laws in restraint of personal liberty, which do not press equally on all its members? And it therefore may not be unworthy the consideration of those who are making the present attack upon the fortunes and honour of the West Indians—how far the peace of the society may be hazarded, and what anarchy, confusion, and bloodshed may follow too nice and critical an enquiry into the exact portion of each man's particular liberty, the society of which he is a member may have a right to deprive him of? What would the people of England think of men, who, under a similar pretext of zeal for the rights of humanity, should erect themselves into a society, and endeavour, by preaching, writing, and publishing, to stir up the soldier, the sailor, the artisan,

and the peasant, to assert their rights to an equal portion of liberty with those who now lord it over them? Could any religious man amongst the present petitioners object to, or decline promoting an agrarian law, in favour of the distressed poor of Great Britain?

As the following Observations were written without the author's having seen any of the tracts lately published upon the subject he treats of, except the Dean of Middleham's Letter, they cannot be considered as intended to be an Answer to any other. His principal view was to give an exact account of the common and usual treatment of slaves in the West Indies. To a general charge of cruel treatment, unsupported by proofs, a general denial ought surely to be esteemed sufficient. Specific charges may demand particular answers from the accused individuals; and if any are found who deserve censure or punishment, it is to be wished they may meet with it. If there are too many people already in these islands capable of treating their slaves, their fellow creatures, with cruelty, the planters may be allowed humbly to hope their numbers may not be augmented by Great Britain unloading her gibbets, or emptying her gaols into them, in order to furnish the planters with *industrious labourers*, in the stead of the negroes meant to be emancipated; or to supply the place of those which they consider themselves as entitled to expect

from Africa, to assist them in the cultivation of their estates, under the assurances of the Acts of Parliament which have passed for the establishment, encouragement, and protection of that commerce,

It must be matter of triumph to the gentlemen in these islands to find, that although the humane persons who have busied themselves in procuring anecdotes of the cruelties exercised by the proprietors over *their poor oppressed slaves*, have extended their enquiries over all the islands, from Barbadoes to the Bahamas, they have not been able to collect as many stories of that kind as there are different colonies; and, what is still more extraordinary, most of those they pretend to adduce, few of which are better authenticated than Mr. Clarkson's fable of the iron coffin of Jamaica, are said to have happened many years ago. Surely people of candour will consider this circumstance, not only as a complete refutation of the calumnies propagated against the West Indians, but as the highest eulogium upon them and their conduct.

It is not impossible, but the greatest part of the following Observations may have already been made by others. It was from that apprehension the author has, for some time, been unwilling to publish them; but some friends, whose judgment he esteems, having conceived

ceived they may be useful at this juncture, and it being hoped the candid reader will reflect, that even if the same remarks should have already been made by others, that when different persons, unknown and unconnected with each other, agree in their testimony to the same fact, it is a proof of the veracity of both. The author, however, still submits his thoughts to the public with reluctance and diffidence ; as he has been less attentive to express himself with critical accuracy, than solicitous to give the public faithful information, on a subject of so much consequence to commerce and navigation, the sources of the present national wealth and prosperity.

KINGSTON, JAMAICA,

June 12th, 1788.

OBSER.

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

IT is now many years since I read a Pamphlet respecting the Injustice of the Slave Trade, and the Barbarity with which Negroes were treated by their Owners in the Sugar Colonies, written by Mr. *Glanville Sharpe*. Though not then established in this part of the world, my business had occasioned my temporary residence in the West Indies, and led me also much among all the British islands, from Barbadoes to St. Kitts, inclusively. I had abundant opportunities of judging how far that gentleman's remarks and strictures were just and merited; and I was fully convinced that he had been most egregiously imposed upon. The greatest part of his assertions, I was satisfied, were void of foundation, and where he seems to have been better informed, every fact is beyond measure exaggerated. If I recollect right, he quotes some of the antient laws of Barbadoes as the rules of government of the slaves throughout the West Indies. In that instance, and, as far as I can remember, in the whole of his pamphlet, he appeared to me to be unacquainted with his subject, and

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I concluded, he was then, as I am convinced he is now, actuated by a zeal not according to knowledge.

It is long since the clamour raised against the Slave Trade, and the charge against the planters for the inhumanity of their conduct towards the negroes they possess, have reached them. The insignificance of the persons from whom they originated, and the falsity of the reports they circulated, raised no other sensations amongst them, than those of contempt. Some, indeed, who had a knowledge of the cruelty and misconduct which one of the most remarkable writers upon the subject used to be guilty of towards the slaves that were under his care in one of the Windward islands, added to their contempt, a degree of astonishment at his audacity, equal to the detestation they formerly expressed at his behaviour; I should not, however, have considered any reply necessary: but, as this charge of inhumanity, against the planters, seems now to have gained credit with many people of worth and integrity, so far as to induce them, to consider it a duty incumbent on the good and virtuous of all denominations, to enter into a general combination, if not to procure an emancipation of all the negroes already in bondage, at least, to put a stop to what they consider as a most shameful traffic; by which others may be reduced to the like unhappy condition; a traffic, which is by some, said to be equally contrary both to the laws of God and Nature.

Amongst many others, (who I doubt not are actuated by the purest principles of humanity and philanthropy) a gentleman, whose character I highly revere, has written from England, to a particular friend of mine on this island, declaring his intention of giving a bill,
intended

intended to be brought into Parliament to abolish the Slave Trade, his strongest support and assistance. To convince this gentleman, and those, who like him, act from principle, how grossly they have been imposed upon, in being taught to think so ill of the proprietors of slaves, I take up my pen; and doubt not, but I shall shew, that so far from the negroes in the West India islands being in a state of misery, their lot is to be envied by the generality of the peasants in every part of Europe.

In order to fulfil my purpose, it certainly is not incumbent to enter into a defence of the Slave Trade itself; and, under the present prepossession of all ranks of people in favour of general liberty, the attempt may be considered as imprudent; yet amongst those who have now set themselves to oppose this commerce, some persons may have religious scruples respecting the lawfulness of it, I cannot resist the temptation of pointing out to such of them, as allow the Scriptures to be the word of God, that they will find it there, expressly tolerated, at least.

The curse upon Canaan, indeed was "A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." But Noah said, "*Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.*" God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan *shall be his servant.*" Exod. chap. 9.v. 25. *

Isaac

* It is generally allowed by the learned, that the Europeans are the descendants of Japheth.—The Welch particularly claim to be descended from Gomer, his eldest son, and they antiently called themselves *Gomeri*.

Isaac, when he blessed his son Jacob, said unto him, "Come near now, and kiss me my son ;—and he came near, and kissed him,— and he *blessed him, and said,—let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be Lord over thy brethren; and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee; Cursed be every one that curseth thee; and blessed be he that bleffeth thee.*" Gen. 27. v. 29, and again; verse 27, to shew what was meant by Jacob's being Lord over his brethren, Isaac says to Esau, "Behold, I have made him *thy Lord*; and all his brethren have I given to him *for servants.*" That the sale of men from very early time prevented murder, is evident from the same authority. Gen. chap. 37. v. 26. "And Judah said unto his brethren; what profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; *for he is our brother, and our flesh.*"

It is contended by many pious Christians, that the moral precepts of the Mosaic law are of eternal obligation; and few people who profess that faith, will deny the authority of the Old Testament, as to those laws which are not abrogated by the New. Thus, the laws of the Decalogue are allowed to be in full force; and I am inclined to believe, that whatsoever appears in the Bible to have been authorised by the Deity, (who was, and is,

The eldest born of Ham, who was accursed by his father, was called Cush, which, in the Hebrew language signifies *black*. Ethiopia, under which name it is supposed Africa is included, is called in Scripture, the land of Cush, and the inhabitants Cushim, or Cushites. Is it an improbable conjecture that the Negroes are descendants of Ham, by his eldest son Cush? Which may, perhaps, account for the degraded situation those people have ever continued in.

and

and will be the same, then, now, and for ever) which has not, like the ceremonial law, been forbid, or changed since, by the same authority, cannot be considered as criminal. That the purchasing slaves is a very antient practice, is certain. It appears to have caused no surprize in the rest of Jacob's children, when Judah proposed the transaction to them; the Ishmaelites do not seem to have looked upon it as a novelty; and the whole of the account shews it to have been an ordinary transaction; which surely proves it was not considered as *either illegal, or uncommon*.

That it was permitted by God, would be clear from the foregoing passages: But if any doubt should still remain in the mind of the Christian reader, his scruples will surely be removed by the following directions given by the Deity himself, to Moses, in Mount Sinai. "Both thy bond men and thy bond maids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the Heathen, which are round about you; of them shall you buy *bond men and bond maids*. Moreover, of the children of the strangers, that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of *their families* that are with you, which they begat in your land; and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be *your bond men for ever*: But over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour." Lev. chap. 25, v. 44. Nor is it forbidden to the children of Israel to *sell themselves* to strangers; it is only provided, "in such case, that the near of kin may redeem them; and in case they are not redeemed before, that they should go free at the Jubilee. And, if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth

dwelleth by him wax poor, and *sell himself* unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family; after that he is sold, he *may be redeemed* again; one of his *brethren* may redeem him; either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin, unto him, of his family, may redeem him; or, if he be able, he may redeem himself; and he shall reckon with him that bought him, from the year that he was sold to him, unto the year of the Jubilee; and the price of his sale shall be according to the number of years; according to the time of a hired servant, shall it be with him." — Verse 47, *et seq.*—

"And if he be not redeemed in these years, then he shall go out in the year of the Jubilee; both he and his children with him." v. 54. And indeed until the year of the Jubilee, one of the Israelites might be sold to another,

"And if the brother that dwelleth by thee, be waxen poor, and he *be sold* unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve *as a bond servant*, but as an *hired servant*, and as a sojourner he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of the Jubilee." verse 39. What difference there was in the nature of the service of the *hired servant* and the *bond servant*, I know not; but it was declared in verse 42, as well as verse 46, "that they should not rule one over another with rigour. This precept I hope the gentlemen in England will consider as binding upon them! And I beg leave to recommend it to the consideration of the President, and the rest of Humane Society met in the Old Jewry, before they indulge their humanity and compassion, by relieving the poor negroes from oppression, whose sufferings distress them so severely, notwithstanding their distance from the place where they are taught to believe so much cruelty is used, to examine whether they do not at this moment suffer others to exercise, or exercise themselves

"over

“ over their brethren, over one another, ” a rigour and a cruelty, the half of which, if exercised by a tyrant planter over his slaves, would make him justly odious to his neighbours and fellow citizens, and occasion those very slaves to revolt.

Amongst the number of people whose imaginations have been heated by harangues from the pulpit, and by advertisements in the newspapers, calling on the good and virtuous, in the name of humanity and religion, to unite their efforts to procure the abolition of the Slave Trade, whose passions have been stimulated by those means, and by medals, with the impression of a naked human figure on his knees, bound in chains, and lifting up his hands to Heaven, as deprecating the wrath of his tyrant, with a legend suited to the views and intentions of those who had them struck, many may be found who act from the best motives ; but the persons who first raised the present clamour, and some who now join in the cry, are assuredly men of a different description : Several of them have lived in the West Indies ; have received the most hospitable and kind treatment from those whom they now traduce ; and knew, of a certainty, the falsity of the shocking accounts they have propagated of the ill-treatment negroes receive from their masters. Who are they who thus presume to emancipate these *unfortunate victims* of human luxury and avarice ? Are they not men who keep their brethren and fellow citizens in a bondage infinitely more strict and severe !

What is the situation of a British soldier ! If slavery is unlawful, can any one have a right to make himself the slave of another ? But, if he has, in some particular

cular case, can it be said, that he who, in a state of intoxication, (reduced to that state by the arts and persuasions of a recruiting serjeant) or from folly, passion, or misfortune, may have enlisted for a soldier, shall not, when he is become sober, on cooler reflection or on a change of circumstances, be intitled to repent of his engagements, and be liberated from them? Is the poor unfortunate peasant in a state of freedom, who dares not pursue the dictates of religion and nature, by uniting himself to the woman he loves, because the unfeeling despot of the village shall threaten, that if he marries, he will not employ him longer in his service, and he sees no means of supporting the family which may be the consequence of the tender attachment it is his wish to form? Can that man be said to be free, who like the Serf of old, is chained, as it were, to the glebe whereon he was born? Who is not permitted to change his abode, to obtain the means of bettering his condition; for such, in reality, is the operation of the poor laws in England†. —13 and 14. C. II. c. 12. sect. 1.

Shall

† A Lad serves his apprenticeship to a Wheelwright or Blacksmith in the parish of A———. That parish has no employment for more than one such Tradesman. The young man wishes to marry a young woman of the parish of A. and to go with her and reside in the next parish of B. where there is no such artificer, and where he could support himself and his wife, and provide for his family, if he should be blessed with one. But the parish of B. will refuse to receive him, unless he produces a certificate from the parish of A. that in case of any misfortune, he, nor his family, shall become burthensome to the parish of B. The parish of A. where he cannot find employment, refuses him such certificate; the consequence is, the poor industrious and well disposed young man, is deprived of

Shall men be our accusers and our judges, who can, without remorse, be witnesses of the tyranny exercised on the industrious mariner; who, after an absence from a tender wife, and helpless family, for a considerable length of time, when he is just returned to enjoy and participate with them the fruits of his industry and his perils; shall be torn away to fresh danger and fresh perils; daring whose absence, that very wife and family, from whose embraces he is torn, are left to pine in want and misery? Are such men to be the patrons of liberty, and protectors of the negroes? Are the proprietors of slaves to be branded with the names of tyrants and oppressors, by those, by whom the soldier and the pressed sailor are enslaved? For is it not slavery to be forced to submit to the arbitrary will of another; to be subjected to cruel scourgings, and other most ignominious punishments, and to death itself, for being subject to human infirmity, for a weakness of nerve, which will make a man tremblingly refuse to march up to the mouth of a cannon, or steer a ship into inevitable danger, against a hostile enemy? Are people thus treated free, and are negroes slaves? Shall people, I say, boast of humanity, who, perhaps, daily see the victims of their ambition and cruel policy,

" Beg bitter bread thro' realms their valour sav'd,"

C

And

gaining his bread; he is prevented from marrying; the passions of the young people get the better of their prudence; the girl proves with child; the poor young fellow runs away and enlists for a soldier; the girl loses her reputation, (or perhaps, to preserve it, procures an abortion—or, horrible to relate, murders her infant!) or is sent to the House of Correction, and shortly after, perhaps is abandoned to misery and distress. Yet are these people *free*! and speak with pity of the situation of *slaves* in the West Indies!

And do they satisfy themselves, that while they neglect, or, perhaps, assist, in the commission of these enormities, without a struggle to prevent them, they make amends, by endeavouring to redress the grievances, real or pretended, of the negroes upon the coast of Africa. Are these people to complain of the purchase of slaves, who, patiently suffer their fellow subjects, their fellow citizens, their brethren, to be thus bought and sold, and transported, not to climates congenial to those which gave them birth, but to the burning regions of the torrid zone, or to countries almost covered with perpetual snows; to be employed, not in the cultivation of the ground, in agriculture, and in the arts of peace; but, in ravaging, destroying, and depopulating the finest countries of Asia, or invading the peaceful retirement of the American savages, whose territories they usurp, whose hunting grounds they render useless, whose health they destroy, and whose morals they corrupt?

How strange and inconsistent is the conduct of mankind! It is not to be doubted, but amongst these petitioners for abolishing the Slave Trade, may be found men who have commanded troops against those who never injured them; nay, who may even now be soliciting their friends, or expending their money in procuring means or licence, for themselves, their sons or relations, to be empowered to lead a battalion of Sepoys, or a company of Europeans, (enslaved, for that purpose) against the sage and religious inhabitants of Benares, who, actuated by real humanity, reject, with horror, the idea of shedding blood, even the blood of animals.

Shall I be answered, that what I complain of are evils which must be borne, because the welfare and prosperity of the nation require it ! And may not the West Indians avail themselves of the same plea, against the present clamour ?

Fully am I convinced, in the present state of the world, of the impracticability of a nation existing without soldiers and sailors ; but, I insist upon it, they are in a state of slavery. Well I know, that “ the rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is the servant of the lender.” Sure I am, that the labourer in England, who is the *slave of necessity*, serves a harder task-master than the African finds in the West-Indies. No severities, there exercised, are equal to the cruelty of enticing poor people, by a small addition of wages, to work in lead, quick-silver, or other metals, or deleterious manufactories, which in a very few months, or years, render the life of the poor victim an unremitting scene of torture and misery, which death alone can relieve him from. Is purchasing negroes in Africa, and keeping them in slavery, so great an act of cruelty as the declaring them free, and then suffering them to perish with cold, hunger, and disease, in the streets of the metropolis ? || Such is too frequently the lot of the
poor

|| When the determination of Lord M——d that the negro Somerset was entitled to the writ of Habeas Corpus, and it was declared, in consequence of his being brought before the court, that his master was not authorized to send him back to Virginia, it was immediately understood, by the negroes in England, that they were free in that country ; and so many left their masters, that their numbers were said to amount to near 15,000 ; many of them had sense enough to return to their duty, and of those who did not,
C 2 the

poor of Great Britain, to be regarded ; the members of the society met in the Old Jewry profess their abhorrence of West Indian cruelty, while they seem not to be shocked at the scenes of misery which are daily before their eyes. Although, I allow that many of the evils which exist in England, cannot be totally eradicated, yet I hope I may be permitted to say, to the gentlemen who are members of the society abovementioned, and the other petitioners for procuring the abolition of the Slave Trade, that we have a right to expect, if they are actuated by the true spirit of Christianity, they will begin by alleviating the fate of their own poor, as far as may be possible, before they trouble themselves about us. When we have the satisfaction to know that the brave and undaunted seaman, is secure from being torn from the arms of the partner of his soul, and from the children of his love, whose happiness, certainly, and whose existence, probably, depends upon the exertion of his industry and skill: When we see that the man, who has been, perhaps, forced to enlist as a soldier, but whose nerves are so unstrung, as to render him incapable of facing his enemy, can with facility, procure his release from a slavery he is incapable of supporting—when for the sale, or loss, of a pair of spatterdash-es, or trifling accoutrement, he shall not be subjected to a punishment at the halberts, severer than those which negroes in the West Indies undergo, for burglaries and other felonies of equal enormity?—When we know that the industrious peasant in England shall be allowed to work for his living, wherever he can find employment, without fear of being seized on by an unfeeling parish officer,

the greater part perished miserably. Some, indeed, were, happily for themselves, impelled by hunger and want, to commit crimes which caused their misery to be more speedily terminated by the sword.

officer, and passed back to his native parish.—When we learn that the young people of both sexes, are encouraged, or even permitted, to avow their mutual inclinations for each other, and suffered to marry, without fear or threats of being dismissed from their employments, under the apprehension they may encrease the number of honest and industrious poor; we may acknowledge their right to censure, and regulate our conduct. Those who act from religious motives, are entitled to have great allowances made for them, however they may be mistaken ; but can the prelates, and other dignified clergymen, or even the pious and humane Mr. Ramsey, think it possible, we should be persuaded that their present outcry is occasioned by a zeal for the Christian religion, and a regard for its precepts? We know *that* establishes a perfect equality among its professors, even in point of rank. Matth. 20 and 27, Mark 6 and 27,—and the disciples of our blessed Master are enjoined to sell all they have and give to the poor. Christians, when the influence of the gospel had a proper effect on their lives and conversations, had all possessions in common. Mark 10, v. 21, Acts, c. 4, 32, 34, 35.

Perhaps it is not possible a nation can exist as such, if the people, in every circumstance, conformed strictly to the laws of Christianity. But those who particularly devote themselves to the service of God and his Church, might obey the positive precepts, and follow the examples above cited. There is nothing therein which is impossible; nothing which will disturb, or be injurious to society ; on the contrary, nothing would contribute so much to influence the laity, as such bright examples of forbearance and charity ; and therefore have we not a right to say to these reformers, shew us, gentlemen, that you act from principle, by obeying the laws

laws of that religion, which alone can give you a right to consider that species of servitude, you call slavery, unlawful; or, entitle you to endeavour to put a stop to a commerce which has existed throughout the whole world, from the remotest antiquity, and which is authorized and encouraged, not only by the municipal laws of your own country, but by those of every other commercial nation in Europe. When you have shewn, gentlemen, your sincerity, by the unequivocal proof of giving up your own fortunes, to be divided among the poor, and distressed, you may expect we shall not so strongly oppose your disposing of ours; we may then think it worth our while to read the sermons and pamphlets with which we hear the pulpit and the press have been groaning for some months past; until then, gentlemen, you must excuse us, if we think the best excuse which can be made for you, is "*ye know not what ye do.*"

It is of the essence of innocence to be unsuspicious, Although the planters, in the West Indies, have long found themselves the objects of abuse, they have, as I before observed, treated the calumnies and idle stories circulated respecting them, with the silent contempt they have merited. They could not help, however, being surprised, when they saw a letter from a native of the West Indies, a dignified clergyman, give a sanction to reports, which they considered it scarcely possible he should believe himself; when they learned that not only private men, but prelates, universities, and other public communities, respectable for learning and knowledge, had stood forth to solicit the legislative body of the kingdom to interfere, in putting a stop to a commerce of the utmost importance to the public at large, as well as to the private interest of some of the petitioners in particular. They are, however, but slightly
alarmed

alarmed at the attempt; nay, I believe I may say, that it is considered, by them, as incredible, that Parliament will consent to abolish a trade, on which the very existence of the sugar colonies depend. They doubt not the ministers will act with great caution, before they risque so bold a measure as will hazard the destruction of settlements, whose productions alone pay duties to the amount of more than two millions sterling per annum.

If the commerce of Africa was not carried on by Great Britain, it would be by our commercial rivals the French and Dutch, from whom we must be contented to get a clandestine supply of negroes, or our colonies would decline so rapidly, as to be no longer worth the national attention or regard. But though the planters are very clear the wisdom of Parliament may be depended on, not to put a stop to this trade, and they may as soon expect the humane subscribers would prevail on the legislature to abandon the commerce of India, on account of the enormities said to have been committed there, (that commerce would, indeed, in no slight degree be affected, if the present attempt should succeed) yet they are not without their doubts, but the ministers may be impelled by public clamour, or induced by a desire to increase or secure their well deserved popularity, to recommend or form some regulations respecting the management of negroes in these parts of the world, which may have serious bad consequences. Whether any interposition of the legislature of Great-Britain, in this business, may be necessary or prudent, will perhaps, appear problematical to those who will inform themselves of the actual situation and treatment of the slaves in the West Indies. It shall be my endeavour to give such information, and vindicate the character of
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the colonists from the slanderous pens and tongues of those who calumniate them.

In my attempt to satisfy the minds of those gentlemen, who, from motives of humanity, have joined the present pursuit, and have believed the false accounts circulated to the prejudice of West Indians, I shall not spend my time in enquiring after the truth or falsity of every story of cruelty or inhumanity, which the industry of the busy inquirer may have picked up, and many of which may, perhaps, have some foundation; as there are, doubtless, in the West-Indies, as well as in England, people whose vicious habits may make them deviate from, and disregard every principle of humanity, and sacrifice their dearest interest to the violence of their passions, their caprice, their rage, or their resentment §. I shall argue from more general grounds; and doubt not to shew that the nature of man must be absolutely and essentially changed, by a passage cross the ocean, if he is not actuated by the same motives of conduct, in one part of the world as in another. Whatever difference may be found, that is to be imputed to climate, will surely be in favour of those who dwell

§ What would gentlemen in England say, if the West Indians were to collect from the session papers, and from the Judges Calendars of the several Courts of Oyer and Terminer throughout England, for the space of 20 or 30 years, an account of all the murders and enormous barbarities perpetrated within that period? Would the black catalogue, which must certainly result from such inquiry, justify their abusing the whole inhabitants of Great Britain? Yet stories, not authenticated as those would be, picked up at random, happening in the course of a century, neither name, time, nor place ascertained, are the principal foundations of the present clamour.

dwelling between the tropics, where every thing conspires to relax the fibre, and soften the mind.

The inhabitants of all tropical countries, when first discovered, were found to be a mild, inoffensive, hospitable race of people, compared with the ferocious savages of the higher latitudes, where the scarcity of nourishment, for man and beast, kept them both, as it were, in a state of warfare, and disposed the individuals of the same species to prey one upon another. A very recent and striking proof of the effect of climate on the mind, is to be found in the discoveries lately made in the South Seas, and in the difference between the inhabitants of Otaheite, and those of New Zealand.

People used to reflection would have doubted, one would think, whether the inhabitants of the West Indies were in general addicted to cruelty, even if they only considered the climate they lived under; but it is unaccountable that stories of the inhumanity of the West Indians should be so easily credited by gentlemen who have long been used to associate with them; many of the present inhabitants of those countries have been educated in Great Britain, and there are few counties in England in which some of the gentlemen of that part of the world, have not been, or are not at present, resident. There are a few of the subscribers, of any consequence, who have not known some of them; and many have lived in habits of intimacy with people from one or other of the sugar colonies.

These gentlemen, I am sure, will testify, that whatever follies and vices they may have observed amongst *West-Indians*, as they are called, philanthropy, benevolence,

nevolence, and generosity, are good qualities they are not deficient in. Let the poor and the indigent, in the parishes in the country where these West-Indians take up their residence, be asked whether they do not find as much relief from them in distress, as much charity and hospitality exercised towards themselves, as they ever experienced from the former proprietors or occupiers of the mansions these planters live in, to the great advantage of the neighbourhood.

To the honour, and in proof of the humanity of the West India gentlemen, I beg leave to remark, with respect to such of them as reside in London, that it is very seldom a servant falls ill in any of their families, (even of the small pox, unless circumstances in the latter case forbid it) that he has not the attendance of the physician and apothecary of the family, and every other comfort and assistance the exigency of the case may require; instead of being sent to some hospital, where, though undoubtedly the assistance and the treatment they receive, is superior to what is to be met with in any other part of Europe, it is not possible people should meet with the same care and tenderness they experience from their fellow servants, with whom they have lived in habits of intimacy and friendship.

The truth of the foregoing facts are notorious to multitudes; and I do not believe I hazard contradiction when I assert, that the West India gentlemen have, at least, as good understandings, and as great a share of common sense as fall to the lot of an ordinary farmer. Their enemies and calumniators, impute to their avarice, their cruelty to their slaves; these people will, therefore, allow that they have, at least, as great a regard to their own interest. Thus, at any rate,
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it will not be unreasonable to conclude the planter will take care of his slave ; if, as I have endeavoured to shew, he is a man of benevolence and humanity, the slave is secure of kind treatment, from his master's goodness of heart ; if he is a self-interested, avaricious being, his vices will have the same effect on his conduct.

A farmer in England is obliged to have a team, or a team and a half of horses, to cultivate a farm which he rents for 100 or 120l. a year. These horses will cost him, say 14l. ster. per head, one with another ; he knows that, without the labour of these horses, he could not do his business. What credit would a man obtain, who was to tell us in the West Indies, that the farmers in England say, that a horse, with good treatment, will last seven years ; but that, if they can make him plough two acres a day, instead of one, they consider it more to their advantage to kill him in three years and a half. Should we not say, " surely, Sir, you strive to impose upon us : they must certainly have more understanding ; they must assuredly argue differently ; they must reflect, that if they make their horses exert themselves beyond their strength, they will destroy them, without benefiting themselves ; that if they force them to plough two acres a day, when they ought to plough but one, they will probably kill them in a week ; and that it is very necessary not to exact too severe labour from so useful an animal ; as they must have some time seen or heard, of a horse dying on the spot, when he has been over-rode or strained too hard."

Yet a reverend Dean, a native of the West Indies, and who, we may suppose, resided in the place of his

nativity (which appears to have been the island of Barbadoes) for some time, and ought to know something of the subject he writes on, does not blush to relate a story, full as incredible as ridiculous, in a Letter to the *Treasurer of the Society* instituted for the purpose of effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade ; and the Chairman of the Committee of that Society, Mr. Glanville Sharpe, is not ashamed to circulate such nonsense in print, "for the sake of the advantage that may accrue to the cause of humanity, by the publication of the said letter."

But to return to the English farmer. Let us consider how he conducts himself, without supposing him to be wiser or better than the common run of such people, or to have a remarkable share of humanity ; if he is an attentive, industrious man, he will see that his horses are well curried, watered and fed ; that they are well littered down at night. If his men work, drive, or ride them too hard, or otherwise abuse them, he will turn his men away. No sooner does his horse, his ox, his cow, or even his sheep get sick, or either of the former refuse his oats, his grass, or his water, but a farrier is sent for, every attention is paid to the poor animal, which is nursed, fed, and watched with great care. The greater his avarice, or the poorer he is, the greater is his anxiety to save the poor animal's life, on whose services his fortune and his welfare depend. His ewes, his lambs, his poultry and his hogs, all call for his care and his protection, which his regard to his own interest impels him to afford them, even although he should not have any humanity in his disposition, a virtue which many among this class of
citizens

citizens are not overburthened with ; as it is not uncommon to find instances of farmers, who when the poor labourer, with a large family of helpless children, falls sick, abandon him to penury and distress ; nay, probably the farmer, before he would hire him, took care to demand a certificate from the parish he belonged to, to prevent his being chargeable, in case of sickness, to that district his labour, while in health, contributed to enrich ; or, perhaps, the prudent farmer, when he hired him, took care to make his contract for a less term than would entitle the labourer to a settlement,* and the poor victim of oppression, languishing (I can scarce say) on *the bed* of sickness, may perhaps be carried from place to place in a cart, through vile roads and inclement weather, accompanied with a distressed and weeping wife and helpless children, to seek support from the officers of his own parish, perhaps as little inclined to afford it him as those by whom he was sent.

Ye humane subscribers to the abolition of the Slave Trade, are none of you of the spirit of such a farmer ? Do none amongst you treat your hounds and your pointers, your pigs, your oxen, and your horses, with more humanity than you do your fellow creatures ?

It will not be doubted by you, gentlemen, that a regard to his interest makes the farmer take care of his horses, even if possessed of little or no humanity ; and is it to be supposed that a planter, a man of education, (for such the West India planters generally are) and of common sense, who knows, that without the assistance

* Vide the Case of Ranton and Haughton. Str. 83.

of his negroes, the work of his plantations cannot go on; who also knows, that an able working negro out of the ship will cost him forty to forty-five pounds sterling, and that such negro, when *seasoned*, as it is called, to his estate, and used to that kind of labour necessary in the colonies, will be worth near double the money, shall have so little regard to his own interest, as to starve, abuse, ill-treat, and mutilate these people, and thus ruin himself and his family.

It is well known, that from 70l. to 80l. sterling is the common value of an able, seasoned, field negro; that is, a negro able and willing to work with his hoe, without understanding any trade, or having any other qualification: but amongst the negroes of a plantation, an expert driver, boiler, distiller, wheel-wright, carpenter, mason, blacksmith, or other tradesman, may be worth from 100l. to 500l. sterling: in short, some of them may be invaluable.

After this account of the importance of negroes to a planter, is it probable, nay, is it credible, that their proprietors should treat them with the severity and cruelty imputed to them?

It is not my intention or desire to induce people to believe, that folly, passion, and vices, are not to be found amongst the inhabitants of the sugar colonies. There are persons of a cruel disposition, whose slaves are less happy than those of others. It may appear, that in the madness of passion, a negro has been struck down with a blow, and even killed. Less attention may be paid, by some people, to the food, clothing, or lodging, of the negroes, than prudence and good sense would

would dictate; but, when such a line of conduct is pursued, it is looked upon with general disapprobation: such a person is considered as on the high way to ruin. Do not such things happen in England?—Are there not people who neglect their wives and children, and treat them, and their apprentices, with cruelty?—But because, sometimes, there are such monsters as a Brownrigg, a M'Daniel, Egan, or Berry, would not a man deserve to be hooted, who would set seriously about abolishing the custom of putting poor children out apprentices, or giving rewards for taking highwaymen?

It is said, the best way of learning the general manners of the people of any country, is to consult the laws of that country. Among the Romans, it was long before any law was made to punish a parricide. It is thence argued, such a crime was not known amongst them: 'till it was committed, it was scarcely thought credible that any man should be so extremely wicked. It is observed, that it is but very lately murdering a negro, in some of the islands, has been made capital. It surely is but fair to infer from thence, that such offence was rare! But it is more remarkable, that in all the islands, laws have been long ago made to indemnify the master, at the public expence, who should surrender a negro guilty of a capital crime to justice. What inferences are to be drawn from thence?—Is it not, that the planters interest prevails more with them than the love of justice, that they are not to be trusted with the punishment of their slaves who have been guilty of the most flagrant crimes?—Not as the gentlemen in the Old Jewry, and the petitioners may suppose, lest they should cause them to be punished too severely; but, lest they should screen them from punishment, for fear they

they should lose them, if justice took place : and the interest of the master will suffer less from his negro being put to death, than from his being mutilated, and rendered incapable of work ; for, in that case, he would still be obliged to feed and clothe him, at no inconsiderable expence. And so, say some of the petitioners, you would persuade us, that negroes are never used ill, or cruelly treated, in the West-Indies ? Indeed, gentlemen, I do not attempt it. Besides having some people born amongst us of bad dispositions, we have too many vicious and bad people sent us from Europe ; which, from the scarcity of better white people, or from compassion to their situation, we are obliged, or induced, to employ upon our estates as bookkeepers, or in inferior capacities ; who, having seen how the poor are used at home, and the punishments inflicted upon soldiers and sailors for slight offences, and not having, themselves, any particular interest in the welfare of their master's negroes, may, when they can without the knowledge of their superior, or of the proprietor himself, or his representative, beat, abuse, or otherwise ill treat, the poorer and more indifferent negroes ; those of consequence and character know their own importance—would dare to complain, and would certainly find redress.

It sometimes also happens, that when a negro is worn out with age, or with disease, a bad and unfeeling master will neglect him, and neither feed nor clothe him ; but the legislatures of the several islands have endeavoured to prevent such misbehaviour, by obliging all people to feed and clothe all their negroes, under severe penalties. In the smaller islands, no negroes scarcely can be deserted, but their proprietors are known.

In this island, the proof of the ownership of such a negro is not so easily established: to the honour, therefore, of the gentlemen of the town of Kingston, it ought to be known, they have established an Asylum, to which any of those poor people, whose owners have deserted them, are sent, and carefully provided for, without any money being spent in contesting the place of their *legal settlement*. And, as the negroes tell the names of their masters, though their assertion is not a legal proof, the names, both of the negro and such master, are published in the newspapers; that if the negro has, without the knowledge of his master, strayed from his estate, he may be demanded back; or, if otherwise, the unfeeling master may be exposed to the contempt of his fellow citizens, and to punishment, if discovered.

To prevent also negroes being deserted by their owners, under the specious pretence of giving them *their liberty*, when old and infirm, laws have been passed, in almost every island, to prevent any person from manumitting his slave, unless at the same time a competent provision is made by him for the maintenance of such slave, by settling a pension upon him sufficient for his support; it being the opinion of the *West-Indians*, that *liberty*, without the means of *subsistence*, is *scarcely* worth having.

If gentlemen will give themselves the trouble to look into the colonial laws, they will find the inhabitants of the West-India islands may be trusted to themselves, and that they have goodness of heart sufficient to secure kind treatment, even to their *useless* slaves, without the interference of the petitioners, or the Dean of Middleham :

dleham : as to the useful ones, I trust their own interest will be thought a tolerable security for their conduct.

But, say Mr. Sharpe and the Dean, a man may murder a negro with impunity : he is not, says the latter, in such case, accountable to the magistrate : if the negro is his own property, he is quit by paying a fine of 9l. I think Mr. Sharpe says, though, as I write from memory, I am not certain as to the sum *. But is Mr. Sharpe sure, that at the time he wrote, no act had been passed, inflicting an additional punishment for such an offence to that mentioned in the very old law he quoted?—If there had not, I beg leave to suggest what inference a man of a good heart would have drawn from it. He would surely imagine, the inhabitants of Barbadoes must be a very humane set of people, as in so long a period as hath elapsed since the first settlement of that island, it has not been found necessary to make severer laws against their murdering their negroes, than that which subjects them to so slight a penalty ; whereas, in most other countries, it has been found necessary to restrain such crimes by the severest capital punishments. He would be the more inclined to make this remark, because neither the one nor the other of these gentlemen bring

* In excuse for the colonial laws heretofore not having made the killing of a slave a capital offence, it ought to be recollected, that in England, not a great while before the first settlement of Barbadoes, the punishment for killing not only a villain, but a free man of the highest rank, might be bought off for a small sum of money.—It is also observable, that it is said, Exod. chap. 21, v. 21, 22. “ If a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished : notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished ; *for he is his money.*”

bring any accusation against any person of having committed such murder.

I will take the liberty to observe to Dr. Nicholls, that even if such a crime is not punishable as murder, as an offence *contra bonos mores*, it would be under the cognizance of the magistrates, and the guilty person might be indicted for it, and, if found guilty, might be punished with great severity. After what I have said, I might, perhaps, be excused by the society, and by the Dean of Middleham, if I troubled them no further; but I am desirous, as well as the Reverend Dean, of contributing my mite of information to the society: and after I have cast it into their *Treasury*, I shall beg to be permitted to pay my compliments in particular to the Dean, and to make a few remarks upon his letter, which the society have declared, by their chairman, they suppose may be so serviceable to the cause of humanity.

In order to set those gentlemen's hearts at rest, I will give them a faithful account how negroes are treated; and to be satisfied of the truth of the account, they have only to enquire of those gentlemen of their acquaintance who have lived amongst us.

In general, the houses or huts of the negroes, are built in the most healthy and eligible spots, in the vicinity of the works, that is, of the boiling-house, mill, &c. upon a sugar estate, consequently, near water, which is necessary for the manufacture. They are generally not far from the manager or principal overseer's house, and at no great distance from each other. An hospital is generally constructed near them, with a shop

to hold medicines, an apartment for the nurse, and different rooms for different diseases, and one common room, (generally with a pair of stocks in it,) to confine those who are troubled with sores, and prevent their getting out in the night to go to negro dances, or other improper places, which they are with great difficulty restrained from.

Confinement of a night, in these stocks, (behind which is a platform on which they may lie conveniently and sleep, wrapped up in their blankets, the hole for their feet being parallel with the platform) is frequently the punishment for offences, for which people are hanged in England, or sent to Botany Bay, and is considered by the negroes as a very severe one. These houses, if single, are about fifteen or twenty feet long; about six or seven feet in the plate, and raised upon hard wood posts, or masons work, a little from the ground; if double, they are of considerably larger dimensions; in the single houses, one, in the double houses, two families generally reside, unless a woman should have several children, when, sometimes, a whole double house is allotted one family. The negroes sometimes (and principal negroes will generally) chuse to build their own houses, when they will make them of such dimensions, smaller or larger, as they think proper, the master finding the materials, and occasionally assisting with labour. Sometimes these houses are covered with shingles, but in general the negroes prefer their being covered with thatch, as warmer, and more commodious. They love to have the smoke of their fires, which they make upon the ground, circulate in the house, and escape through the thatch. These houses or huts are indeed comfortable dwellings, compared

pared with those of the labouring people in most parts of England; and from the accounts I have heard of the cabins of the poor in Scotland and Ireland, as much superior to them as a palace to an ordinary cottage. In the neighbourhood of their houses, they generally have a pig-stye, in which they fatten a barrow or two, and sometimes they keep a sow; though on sugar estates the latter is not always permitted, from the difficulty a negro has to procure a sufficient quantity of food for a sow and a litter of eight or nine pigs.† Every negro is allowed a small piece of ground, seldom less than the eighth of an acre, in the islands, where it is scarce and most valuable; in Jamaica, and many other of the islands where it is plenty, they may cultivate as much as they chuse. I have known some industrious negroes have an acre or two of ground, compleatly cultivated in plantains, corn, yams, cocoas, or eddowes; thyme, echallots and other pot herbs, pine apples, guavas, limes, oranges, lemons, and other fruits; which they sell for a great deal of money. The master generally allows each negro a good warm blanket, once every two years; hats or caps, woollen jackets, or wrappers, they have generally once a year, and also one or two suits

† The reason of this prohibition is, that when a negro finds he has not a facility in procuring sufficient food for his sow and pigs, he will let them loose, that they may get into his master's canes. And very generally in the Windward islands, the negroes will teach their hogs to run into the canes at night, and as soon as the shell blows, or other signal in the dawn of the morning, they will return to their styes. These tricks, it may be imagined, are often detected, and the hogs are killed by the watchmen appointed to guard the canes, who take the head for their fee, and the carcass is carried away by the owner. How are similar trespasses punished in England?—How often there, has the truth of the persecution related by poor Partridge, been verified?

fuirs of Osnaburgh clothing, viz. shirts, or jackets, trowsers, or petticoats. They for the most part work in the field naked from the waist upwards; but I must observe, it is only the most worthless negroes who have not very good cloaths of their own, besides those given them by their masters; cloaths which a labourer, or his wife, or daughter, in England, would be called proud and extravagant if they were to appear in, even at church.

So much for the lodging and cloaths of these *poor distressed slaves*! We come next to speak of their provisions.

The laws in general throughout the islands, direct the master to allow all negroes above 10 years old, indiscriminately, such a quantity of plantains, yams, eddowes, Indian corn, Guinea corn, or other produce of the plantation, or other equivalent, (which, in some of the islands, particularly in St. Kitt's, are rice, caravances, peas, or other pulse from America, or the kernels of beans, which they get from England,) as may be supposed sufficient for their subsistence. A large bunch of plantains, and 7 to 8 quarts of Indian, or Guinea corn, yams, potatoes, or other roots in proportion, is thought a sufficient allowance of farinaceous provisions for a week; from four to seven herrings, or from 2lb. to 3lb. of salt fish a week, and to the mothers of children under 10 years old, half the quantity: and these laws enforce such distribution under considerable penalties.

I should be wanting in candour, if I omitted here to remark, that, consistently with my observations before;

such laws being generally made throughout the islands, is a proof that the planters have been negligent in furnishing their negroes with provisions. Those laws are still necessary, as proprietors are apt to trust too much to their negroes, to provide themselves from their grounds; and even where the planter supplies his people, the most liberally, from his own stock, it sometimes happens, they suffer at a particular time of the year, even more than those who depend upon their masters indulgence. It will be rather difficult to make this understood by persons unacquainted with the œconomy of West India plantations. The negroes who consider themselves of character, at the time of the year when provisions are plenty, scarcely deign to receive their allowance of plantation provisions; they have more than they can consume of their own. If they take it from their masters, it is to feed their pigs or their poultry. They always, however, take their allowance of salt provisions, which is what they cannot so readily procure themselves. Perhaps neither the quality nor quantity of that kind generally allowed, may be sufficient for a robust, healthy negro; I should be of that opinion myself, but from the consideration that such negroes, as well from the super-abundance of their own ground provisions, as from their other resources, are enabled, by way of purchase or exchange, to obtain from the Hucksters, or others, salt fish, pork, &c. to make up for any deficiency.

In this island, a scarcity of provisions will not occur so frequently as in the Windward Islands, owing to the great extent of the country, so that if there is a want of rain, and a consequent failure of the provision crops in one part of the island, a ready supply is always
to

to be obtained from a neighbouring one, and the high mountains, which are in no part far distant from the shore, and now generally cultivated in the vicinity of the plantations, afford a very considerable resource. In the Windward islands the crops of provisions oftener fail, nor have the inhabitants there the same resources as are found in the mountains and interior parts of Jamaica; their plantain walks, which are by no means so extensive or numerous, often fail them; particularly in the months of June, July, and August, which are emphatically called by the negroes in the Windward islands, *the hungry time*. Maize or Indian corn is kept, with great difficulty, from the weevil, in granaries: These insects not only destroy the greater part of the flour, but render the remainder unwholesome, from the impossibility of separating it from their excrement and their exuvia. Neither are yams, eddowes, &c. more easily preserved; as (like the onions and potatoes in England, in the spring,) they sprout as soon as the rains set in, from the moisture of the atmosphere, all these kind of provisions are much better and easier preserved by the negroes, in their houses, where the smoke of their fires, and the attention they can pay to such matters, constantly under their eyes, equally contribute to prevent the injury of insects and moisture. The masters are however obliged to have sufficient to supply what is called the pot gang, which consists of such negroes, as from idleness, imbecility, or youth, either cannot, or do not take care of themselves; these people's provisions are cooked for them, and as it is looked upon disgraceful for a negro to have his provisions dressed for him in the pot, when from the accident of the corn and other things spoiling in the master's store, he finds it difficult to provide, or supply his

his negroes with as full an allowance as he would wish to do; the negroes who have not been so careful in the cultivation of their ground, or have squandered away their stock of provisions improvidently, are ashamed to demand aid, and refuse being fed in the pot, by which means they often suffer for some time before they will make their wants known. Thus, some of the stoutest (though not the best) negroes, who in time of plenty would refuse their allowance, or, if they receive it, would give it to their hogs, goats, or fowls, find themselves at a greater loss in the time of scarcity, than those whose known weakness, or idleness, make them more particularly the objects of their masters care and attention.

There is, as may be observed, a difference in the quantity of salt provisions given by different masters to their slaves, and notwithstanding the laws made to oblige them to deliver plantation provisions, many people trust much to their able negroes supplying themselves with ground provisions; neither do they in general get from their masters beef or pork, except at Christmas, unless some of the principal tradesmen or head drivers; but they are, particularly on sugar estates, where their labour is hardest, allowed as much rum as they ought to have. And besides the provisions the slave grows in his grounds and receives from his master, the poultry he raises, sell from 10d. to 2s. 6d. sterling the head; a sucking pig, or a young kid, a dollar, (about 4s. 6d. sterling) a capon, a pair of ducks, or Guinea fowls, as much; the meat of a wether goat, 6d. or 10d. per pound; and the more he raises of these things, the better is his master pleased. A female goat brings two or three kids, generally, at a birth; a ewe-

goat in full milk, is eagerly sought for, by persons who are going a voyage to Europe, or elsewhere, and sells for 40s. to 3l. 10s. sterling; besides which advantages, the negroes catch crabs, fish, and birds,—there are no game laws in the West Indies. Negroes in the vicinity of the sea, often catch turtle, when they come on shore to lay their eggs; they weigh from 160, or 170, to 300 lb. the flesh of them is worth about five pence sterling the lb.† Is this a state of misery?—is this a situation, which the Legislature of the Mother Country is to be called upon to deplore, and to remedy? Compare the situation of these *oppressed slaves* with that of the labourer in England, with a wife and five or six children!

This is, however, only a part of the picture. This is the situation of the *poor slave* in health.—He is attacked by disease! An accident happens to him! A leg or an arm is broke! If his situation is preferable to that of an European, even of an English peasant in health, the difference in sickness is still more conspicuous! Remember only, gentle reader, that this negro is worth from 50 to 300l. sterling, or upwards, and you will the less wonder at it! Recollect also, if you please, that this negro is not only as capable of gratitude, at least, as the farmer's horse, but he is capable of expressing that gratitude, and making his acknowledgments for the care taken of him; and if the servant, or the surgeon, who is employed to attend him, is neglectful, he can complain, and you will not doubt but his owner, even without a virtue belonging to him, will have

* The flesh of the Hawksbill Turtle is less valuable; but the value of the shell compensates for the inferiority of the price of the flesh.

have him carefully attended.* A nurse is always attending in the hospital. The Doctor is paid by the year, not by the visit; therefore avarice, which is by some considered as the spring of the planter's actions, will not induce him to neglect the doctor's assistance. A father of a family, thus sent to the hospital, seldom is denied the additional attendance of his wife; or, at any rate, he has the comfort of reflecting, that neither her, nor his children, are dependant upon *his* labour for their support. In general, whatever is necessary for him, wine, fago, rice, flour, broth, four soups, tamarinds, oranges, pine apples, &c. and other grateful ascescent fruits, which the opulent in Europe can

* The following Anecdote will shew, how far an attention to his interest, will sometimes lead the master of a slave:—The author was many years ago at New-York, in North America, and made a trip to Long Island, with two or three friends, on a party of pleasure. It was in the latter end of the month of October, that to shelter themselves from the cold and rain, they entered a kind of Inn, or Tavern, at a place called Gravesend. The master of the house, a surly German, was applied to, to order more wood to be put upon the fire. There were in the room (a kind of kitchen) the landlord and his wife, and a stout negro woman, which latter was standing within the hearth in the chimney corner. The man ordered his wife, a decent, pretty little woman, but who appeared rather sickly, “*to go and fetch wood for make up de fire, for de gentlemen.*”—The author asked him how he could be such a brute to send his wife out in such weather, when such a stout strapping negro woman stood idle by the fire-side; when he answered, “*no, by G— dat negro wench may catch cold if she goes out in such vedder.*” Upon being asked whether there was not the same, or a greater, risque in his wife suffering the same inconvenience; he replied, with an oath, “*that dere was great difference between de cases; if my negro catch cold and die, it will cost me 70 or 80l. to get such anoder, but if de same ting happens to my wife, I not only can get anoder for noing, but may, perhaps, get money along vid her.*”

scarcely, if at all, attain, await the slightest indication of his wishes. When I say his wife is suffered to attend him, I don't mean merely that she is suffered to sit up with and watch him at night; but that in a case where the disorder is serious, and the danger considerable, at his or her wish, she is withdrawn from the labour of the field, and permitted to bestow her unremitting care and attention on him; his children too are always within his call.

The pregnant woman is also cherished with care; she is scarce five months gone with child before she demands a relaxation of labour, and it is in general with so much difficulty that women in that situation can be induced to work, after that period, until a full month after their delivery, that many people consider the children, born upon an estate, as not worth the expence of raising; and, perhaps, if the attachment of negroes who have children, to their masters, and the estates they live upon, was not taken into the account, there might be some truth in the observation. Those, however, who are of that opinion, when they purchase slaves, prefer buying males to females, the consequence is, that such estates must require continual supplies. But, notwithstanding such difference in opinion, with respect to the advantage or disadvantage attending women's breeding upon an estate, I do not, in a residence of many years in different islands in the West-Indies, remember a proprietor who did not treat pregnant women with gentleness. It is in vain, as they advance in their pregnancy, to tell them that a certain degree of labour and exercise is beneficial both to them and the unborn infant; many of them will not work at all, and scarcely any will do much, and few indeed
compel

compel them. When their time is accomplished, an experienced midwife is always at hand, baby clothes, and every thing proper is provided. During the time they suckle their children, they are allowed to be an hour and an half, or two hours later in the field of a morning; they sometimes quit it sooner at noon, and are always excused bringing grass, &c. for the mules and cattle, when they leave work in the field at night. If, at any time, the child is sick, either from teething, or those other diseases infants are subject to, the mother quits all labour, to stay at home and nurse it. Should I contrast this picture with that of the labourer, or his wife, in England, would it not cause the gentlemen met in the Old Jewry, to blush at the charges of inhumanity they have brought forth, by means of their advertisements, and exhortations to people, to relate all such accounts of cruelty exercised in the West Indies, as they may have seen or heard of; or would any person, who knew how the poor are treated in England, believe, that people who had such strong claims upon their humanity so near them, would neglect them, to listen after stories of the traveller from Africa, or the opposite side of the Atlantic, who tells them,

" Of Antres vast, and deserts idle !

" Of Anthropophagi, who each other eat,

" And men, whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders."

Well, but, say the petitioners, we hear nothing of the unremitting labour of these slaves; the dreadful punishments they undergo; the cruel torments they suffer; the dropping melted sealing wax; pouring boiling pitch upon them, or putting them into iron coffins,
and

and keeping hot ashes round those engines of torture, till the poor devils are barbecued sufficiently.

I will give all the satisfaction I can to the humane and benevolent part of the society, who complain of the treatment of the West Indians to their slaves, because they believe the falsehoods which have been so industriously propagated by ignorant, designing, and wicked men; for which purpose I now enter upon a description of the labours of the slave. It will be unnecessary to particularize the nature of the business of those who attend in the house; who navigate the vessels employed in collecting the produce of the estates, and carrying them to the ships, or to market, or in fishing, or similar services. The number of domestics, and the mildness of the climate, must be sufficient to convince any reasonable man, that their labour is not more, and that they are not subject to half the inconveniences people experience, who are employed in the same manner in England. The account, therefore, which I am about to give, respects the labour in the field, upon a sugar estate, which is the severest employment they have. The slaves are generally divided into three companies, or gangs: the first consists of all the ablest and stoutest men and women, and, in a gang of 200, there may be about 60 to 80 of this description; they are expected to be in the field by the time the sun is risen, that is, about twenty minutes before six in the summer, and as much after in the winter half year; about eight or nine o'clock they sit down in the field to their breakfast, which is generally prepared by the women over night, and consists of roasted or boiled yams, eddowes, or plantains, or such like, and a piece of salt fish, or herrings, by way of seasoning; the second gang break-
fast

fast at the same time, and, generally, amongst the same number of negroes upon an estate as before mentioned, consist of from 18 to 30—they are made up of young boys and girls, breeding women, and convalescents; they are under separate negro drivers, or commanders, and are not put to so hard work, nor expected to be so diligent, as the former, who, notwithstanding, would not, with all their efforts, earn the fourth part of the hire of a labourer in England, if they were only paid in proportion to the work they do. The third set are young children, from eight to twelve years old; and may be to the number of fifteen or twenty, who are attended by a careful old woman, and are either employed in fetching grass or vines for the stock, hogs, &c. or in weeding light grass, or some such gentle exercise, just to keep them employed, and to prevent a habit of idleness growing upon them.

To give the gentlemen in England, who thus kindly watch over the interests of humanity, even in parts so remote from them, some rule, by which to judge of the gentleness or severity of the negroes labour, I do myself the honour to inform them, that in tolerable light land, such as two horses and a man, with a Rotherham or Suffex plough, will plough about an acre or an acre and a quarter of in a day, in the latter end of September; about 40 negroes with hoes, will hole, or prepare, for planting, about an acre of land.* As this is some of the very hardest work they are employed in, they are generally allowed rum, either mixed with
water,

* These holes may be about four feet square, and about five or six inches deep. In St. Kitt's, where the soil is very light and rich, the holes are deeper.

water, or in a dram, once or twice a day, all the while they are so employed, as they also are if engaged in any other labour which is considered as rather heavier than usual, or when the weather is very sultry or rainy: in the latter case, if the rains are continual, they are always called home from their work. The rest of the gang of 200, consist of those who are in the hospital with maladies real or pretended, or sores; tradesmen, cooks, nurses, watchmen, old people, or *young children*, sempstresses, washerwomen, and domestics. In crop time, the distribution of labour on sugar estates is different. The negroes employed in the mill and in the boiling-house often work very late, and some even all night; but they are divided into watches, and it does not come to the same person's turn to sit up in the night oftener than twice in the week, or, at most, every other night; and it is remarkable, that not only the negroes in general, but the stock, cattle, and mules, are heartier and healthier in crop time than at any other season of the year.

To attempt to disprove the charge of cruel punishments, torture, mutilation, &c. would surely be to suppose the persons I am writing to ideots: it is sufficient to declare them to be absolute falsities. That now and then a vicious, a passionate, or a mad man, may abuse his slaves, particularly those idle and dissolute ones, which no mild or gentle admonition, or correction, will reclaim, is not to be doubted. Are there not in England brutal masters, who ill-treat, nay, sometimes murder their apprentices and servants?—Instances even are not wanting there, of parents behaving with horrid cruelty to their own children; but to suppose it as a general custom, or even common, in the

the West-Indies, for men by the severity of their punishments to deprive themselves of their property, or even of the labour of their slaves, is too absurd for people, even in this absurd age, to credit. Ten, twenty, or even thirty lashes, is in general the punishment of negroes for stealing pigs, poultry, lands, or sheep, or for desertion: repeated acts of delinquency, may occasion these punishments to be doubled, but all these flagellations are inflicted with so much care, as rarely to disable the offender from work; and the part least susceptible of a dangerous wound, is that to which the whip is applied; nor is there ever occasion to have a surgeon stand by, to give his opinion (as in the case of the soldier when punished at the halbert) that the criminal can support no greater degree of torment and live! Repeated desertions, sheep-stealing, house-breaking, &c. induce the masters or overseers to chain two or three of them together, and make them, in that situation, do their duty in the day time, and confine them at night, and on Sundays: these are the severest punishments for offences, considered as meriting death in England, and in almost every nation in Europe.*

That

* As a proof of the lenity with which Negroes are now punished in the West-Indies, I beg leave to relate what happened a short time since in this island:

Three negroes contrived to break open the King's Stores, wherein were deposited goods to a large amount, which had been condemned in a Court of Vice Admiralty for having been smuggled. They carried off a considerable quantity of their goods undetected; in a short time after they repeated their crime, with equal success, and the goods carried away were of some hundred pounds value. They were at length discovered in disposing of their goods, tried, and convicted. The ringleader was condemned by the Magistrates and

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Freeholders

That the foregoing is a true and faithful exposition of facts, I appeal to the testimony of the officers of rank and character, who have served in the West-Indies, either in the army or navy; and I hope what I have said in the foregoing sheets, will remove the bad impressions made by the assertions of people, who ought to reflect, that those whose good name they have endeavoured to take away, can say to them, *Are we not men? — Are we not your brethren?*

To the same testimony I appeal (for they must often have observed it) for an account of the confidence and freedom with which the negroes approach their masters, and apply to them to relieve their little wants, or for such favours as they stand in need of; their applications have more the appearance of those of a relation to his parent and protector, than of a slave prostrating himself before his tyrant. Particular instances of kind treatment, which slaves have received from their masters, and numberless accounts of the strong attachment

Freeholders who tried him, to receive thirty-nine lashes on the public parade, in the town of Kingston, and be banished the island; in consequence of which, his owner sent him off to the Bay of Honduras, and sold him there; and the other two received the same number of lashes, and were restored to their owners.—Thus, though the laws in the West-Indies appear sanguinary, from death being made the penalty of many crimes, yet, as the Judges have generally the power of mitigating the punishment from the law, adding, after the word *death*, the words, “or such other punishment as the Court shall approve;” and as the execution of almost all capital sentences, except in Jamaica, in some instances, are suspended until they receive the approbation of the Governor or Commander in Chief, I may venture to affirm, there are fewer capital punishments in seven years in the West-Indies, than are inflicted in one session at the Old Bailey.

ment which they have manifested for them and their families, even to the sacrifice of their lives, would surely be fair and sufficient answers to particular instances of cruelty or oppression; but we can go further:—although many of the islands were attacked and taken, and the whole menaced in the late war, and left in so unprotected a state, that the inhabitants of many of them were often in great distress for a sufficiency of provisions, and other necessities, for their negroes, we challenge our adversaries to shew a single instance, where these *poor, miserable, oppressed slaves*, manifested the smallest inclination to change their masters. The only two islands, indeed, where the resistance made was such as gave the negroes an opportunity of acting without restraint, were St. Kitt's and Tobago. Their fidelity to their masters in both, and the zeal and intrepid courage with which such of them as had arms behaved, in defence of the islands, and of their *own property*, deserve the highest praise. Perhaps the reader may smile at my mentioning *their own property*; but, whatever gentlemen in England may think, the negroes in all the British sugar colonies, have a property, a *peculium*, well worth defending.

In Tobago, the French were so alarmed at the marked fidelity the negroes shewed to their masters, that they published a declaration, they would hang all the negroes they found in arms. Yet the negroes were not in the least intimidated thereby, but were anxious to march against the enemy, wherever their masters would lead them; and after the surrender of the island, Lieut. Colonel Fitzmaurice, of Welch's brigade, an officer of great merit and reputation, declared that he could not have conceived such an attachment could

have subsisted between slaves and their masters, as he had experienced upon that occasion ; for that although he had, for several days together, after the landing of the troops, offered an handful of gold to any negro who would shew him the roads through the country, no one could be found who would undertake to be their guide. I doubt much if such an instance of fidelity to their lords would be often met with amongst the peasants in any part of Europe. Much is said of the misery which the Slave Trade occasions in the country. Although I know very little of the nature of the trade upon the coast of Africa, I much doubt the truth of the observation, as there are very strong reasons to believe the contrary, some of which I shall mention hereafter ; but I cannot help remarking, that the same unfair mode is pursued to decry that commerce, by the writer of the letters on the Slave Trade, published in the newspapers, as in the accusation against the planter. Stories are picked up of matters said to have happened seventy years ago, respecting the conduct, not of English traders, but of Messrs. Brue, Adanson, and Bosman, Frenchmen—Papers, said to be journals of surgeons of Guinea ships, as long since as 1724, the credit of whose pretended authors, or even their existence, are equally problematical. Indeed, I fancy, few sober men will believe the tale of the battle between two negro princes, for the purpose of procuring slaves, in which 4,500 men fell, and that this surgeon of a Guinea ship was on the field of battle, and saw the dead bodies. I am equally ignorant of the manner in which slaves are treated, or the discipline on board the ships in which which they are brought to the West Indies ; but it is natural to suppose, both merchant and mariner take all possible care of the health and condition of them, during

during their passage. If, however, the avarice of the traders should so far blind them to their own interest, as to make them crowd too many negroes together in one ship, such conduct may, with great propriety, be restrained by proper regulations, without injuring, or abolishing the trade itself.

That in the sale of negroes to the Europeans, frauds, or improper conduct may have been committed by the natives towards each other; that there have been masters of ships who have carried off free people, whom they have inveigled on board, and committed other acts of injustice, violence, or depravity, I do not doubt; yet I will not believe, without good evidence, that such actions are common. The knowledge every man has of human nature will teach him, that very enormous crimes are daily committed in society; but, if they became general and unrestrained, society could not exist. It is the business of legislation to prevent crimes, or, where they cannot be prevented, to punish them. Sure I am, both the merchant and planter would be happy to know, that such crimes as above were prevented, or, if committed, most exemplarily punished.

I should here be inclined to spare both my reader and myself further trouble; but, as I have promised to do myself the honour of paying my compliments, particularly, to the Rev. Dr. Robert Bouchier Nichols, Dean of Middleham, I cannot think of breaking my word.

Your being, Reverend Sir, a dignified clergyman of the church of England, and a native of the West
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Indies,

Indies, ought, I humbly conceive, to have made you doubly cautious of, and, indeed, entirely prevented your hazarding assertions, which, from your own count, you was not well able to authenticate; at least, you say, the facts you relate can be better authenticated by the persons in London, to whom you refer your correspondent. The judges of the courts of law require the best possible testimony, before they give sentence; people arraigned before the tribunal of the public, have a right to the same justice. It would have been some satisfaction to us, if you had named your witnesses publicly: if you have done so to Mr. Hoare and the Society, they have concealed them; but in such case, from the zeal which some of those gentlemen have manifested, it is not to be suspected, but that they have strictly examined the persons you have referred them to; as they are silent upon the result of their enquiry, it is probable, those witnesses have not authenticated the stories you have told; and, have we not a right, therefore, to suppose you have been mistaken, as we are deprived of these peoples testimony? I beg leave to be permitted to examine your letter, and to make some slight observations upon it; as, except what has been written in the newspapers, it is the only tract I have seen upon the subject of this intended abolition of the Slave Trade. I am the more inclined to pay this attention to it, as the society to which it is addressed, has supposed it to contain information which may be depended upon, for so I construe their declaration, "that the publication of it may be of advantage to the cause of humanity." You say, Sir, "*if* it can be proved that the natural increase of the negroes, in the islands, would be fully adequate to the cultivation of them, and that such natural increase would be secured by

by humane treatment, no argument could then be brought against the abolition of this *accursed traffick*, but from the private interest of a few individuals on this (the British) side of the Atlantic, chiefly."

You acknowledge, Sir, that a number of facts are necessary to establish that position, and you state only one or two remarkable ones, which, you say, may be better authenticated by *others* than by yourself; but you do not, as I have observed before, name *them*, nor the authors of the extraordinary tale respecting the 75 negroes, out of 170, destroyed by Mr. M'Mahon's severity in two years; nor, the more improbable one, of that man's boasting, that "he did not desire a newly-purchased slave to live more than four years, in which time he could be sufficiently repaid for the purchase."

An *if*, or mere supposition, will never be allowed as argument. I have no doubt to take upon me to convince every man, who will examine the subject, that the natural increase of the negroes in the islands will not be adequate to their cultivation, at least for several generations; and, as the tale you have told is totally destitute of evidence to support it, I hope you will not be offended with me, if I can no further consider the matter related, as a fact, than as it may appear consistent with reason, or probability; and, if I find it contradict both, to reject it accordingly.

With respect to the first point, I beg leave to observe, that the island of Jamaica is supposed to contain 3,500,000 acres, of which about 2,300,000 are accounted cultivable. It is reckoned, that an able negro
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is required for the cultivation of an acre of cane land, but I will suppose, that, reckoning one kind of culture with another, every able negro shall cultivate three acres of the different kinds of produce in the island; 783,333 *able* negroes will then be necessary to cultivate this island only. But the whole island, by the last *recensment*, in the year 1788, contains no more than 257,300 slaves of all denominations; take from that number the persons employed in commerce, fishing, as domestics, old, infirm, and children, and there will not remain more than one seventh part of what is necessary for the cultivation of this island only. When is it to be imagined the natural increase of those now in the island will supply this enormous deficiency?

Your supposing this natural increase will be secured by humane treatment, implies a strong accusation that the negroes are inhumanly treated at present. Accusations ought, always, to be particular and precise: there is otherwise no possibility of giving a full and positive answer to them. I flatter myself I have shewn, in the foregoing pages, that the general charge of inhumanity against the planters, with respect to their treatment of their slaves, is ill founded. I shall now, Sir, examine into the particular charge against Mr. M'Mahon, heretofore of Barbadoes, which, not having any evidence to support it, depends entirely upon your assertion, and I doubt not to shew, to a demonstration, that, however culpable Mr. M'Mahon's behaviour may have been, it is not possible it should have been so to the extent you have represented it.

You, Sir, are the accuser; you speak of the facts as within your own knowledge:—" that Mr. M'Mahon
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died upon his estate at Barbadoes, about 17 or 18 years ago;—as well as you remember, the estate was worth about 30,000*l.* Barbadoes money;—that the late owner had been in possession seven or eight years;—that finding himself encumbered with debt, to a merchant in London, he resolved to pay off this encumbrance by extraordinary exertions;—in consequence of which he destroyed the health and lives of many of his negroes, (75 out of 170 in two years) he was therefore obliged to supply their places with others, purchased from time to time, during the space of seven years, until *at length, upon his own demise*, his estate was left *precisely* in the same state he found it;—the money lost by the death of his slaves, being found equal to the original debt upon the estate.”

Thus stands the indictment against the memory of a gentleman, who, perhaps, may have left near relations, or friends, behind him, whose feelings may be severely wounded by it, but who may have no means of defence, even should the story not be true. I fancy, upon examination, it will prove, like most other tales of the same kind, to be the offspring of malice, credulity, or error.

I will appeal to every gentleman, who knows any thing of the island of Barbadoes, whether about the period you mention,—that is about the year 1769 or 1770, and for several years before and after, the estates in that colony were not in such a manner over-run with the cane ant, black blast, or other vermin, as to render them generally unproductive, so that with every care a man could take, both of his negroes and stock, he could not, in the seven or eight years you mention,

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have at all reduced any debt he might owe, however extraordinary his exertions might have been ; especially as, during the same period, it had pleased the Almighty to withhold from them the usual periodical rains, without which all the planters care and industry will be of no avail ; but if in two years Mr. M'Mahon reduced a gang of 170 negroes nearly one half, he would not have had 20 negroes of his original stock left alive at the end of the seventh year ; which it must have cost him 7000l. sterling at least to replace, besides the loss he must have sustained by the deaths of the new negroes, with which he had replaced them, many of whom, you say, (page 8,) “ when they arrive at the plantation of their purchaser, from the loss of their liberty, their friends, and their country, pine to death ; some destroy themselves ; few, if any, are capable of much labour until the second or third year.” Thus, Sir, if the account you have given of Mr. M'Mahon's treatment of his negroes is true, so far would his estate have been from being left *precisely* in the same state of encumbrance he found it, that he must have suffered at least to the amount of 10,000l. sterling from the loss of slaves only, in addition to the first encumbrance, besides the interest of the original debt, as it would have been absolutely impossible, in the general situation of the island at that time, and the particular state of his negroes (for he could not have many of the remainder capable of any labour, much less of extraordinary exertions) that he should have made a crop more than sufficient to have purchased the working tools, casks, and other necessary utensils of his manufacture, and paid the wages of his overseers, &c.

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Thus, it must be manifest to every one, that your tale cannot possibly be true. But, if it had been so, do you conceive, Sir, that the planters in that, as well as in all the islands where the story would have been told, would not have taken warning from this man's fate, and have treated their negroes with humanity, especially when the example of Mr. Mapp was before their eyes, the value of whose estates, you say, were so much augmented, as well as the number of his negroes, by a contrary conduct. I fear, however, that your panegyric as much exceeds the sober bounds of truth, as your account of Mr. M'Mahon's cruelty. Why should the negroes be excused from labour from eleven o'clock to three, if, as you say, "extreme heat does not incommode them?"—but, as I am less desirous of finding errors in your eulogy than in your satire, I will forbear examining critically into the truth of this anecdote. Sorry, however, am I to say, that when I was at Barbadoes sometime about the year 1780, I saw Mr. Mapp's estates, which were very fine ones, dismantled and desolate. The negroes having been sold, the boilers, stills, &c. taken away from the sugar works, and even the very tiles taken off the buildings, and sold to satisfy the creditors of those estates; the land of which was divided amongst them in small parcels; the greater part of which remained totally uncultivated.

I flatter myself, Sir, I have shewn that the natural increase of the negroes, already in the islands, will not be adequate to the cultivation of them;—I will now beg leave to shew you, why I am apprehensive they hardly ever will. Of the slaves annually brought off the coast, not so much as a third part are females, and

amongst them many are past child bearing. This disproportion of males to females, you must naturally see, will prevent any considerable increase, and occasion a new supply to be wanted.

The small number of females' occasions them to be strongly solicited, in consequence of which many of them prostitute themselves. But, generally, when a planter purchases more young women than men, and preserves that superiority in the number of females over the males upon his estate, the increase is proportionable; few people, however, are in circumstances so easy as to be able to wait the slow, but natural improvement, of their fortunes, by these means; they prefer supplying themselves with full grown male slaves, from whom they may expect more immediate unremitting labour, than from young females, who, as I have before mentioned, do very little work when advanced a few months in their pregnancy, and much less than males, while they are nursing their children; and they have a custom amongst them, of not weaning them for two or three years, which occasions even the breeding women to have fewer children than might otherwise be expected.

If, Sir, I have, and I believe I have, proved, that the natural increase of the negroes in the islands are not, nor will be sufficient for the purposes of their cultivation, other arguments than those of private interest may be brought against the abolition of this *accursed traffick*. I have shewn that this commerce was permitted, and even authorized, by the Deity, and that it is no where censured either in the Old, or, to the best of my recollection, in the New Testament. It appears that

that the possession of slaves, *bond men* and *bond maids*, was considered as a blessing by the antient patriarchs; and that the Deity has been pleased to point out to his chosen people, of whom they are to purchase them.—Why have you ventured to declare this traffick *accursed*? Would it not better have become one of the ministers of the gospel to have said, with Balaam—“how shall I curse what God hath not cursed?”

You say, Sir, “you have not *knowingly exaggerated*, or *misinformed* the person you address, *intentionally*.”—That your account of Mr. M‘Mahon’s cruelty, which I have remarked on, is violently exaggerated, I believe I have made very apparent. That the information you have given the society in the Old Jewry, is not true, in scarcely any of its particulars, is what I shall proceed to shew. If you are in your conscience satisfied, that the other exaggerations and misinformations which I shall convict you of, have not been knowingly and intentionally published by you,—I congratulate you thereon.

A necessary degree of caution indeed, a very little attention to your own account, if you had bestowed it, would have prevented your publication, and saved me the trouble, and you the displeasure, if you should feel any of this address.

“Even extreme heat,” you say, “does not incommode the negroes, nor are they so liable as the white people to the disorders of warm climates, when their blood is not impoverished by extreme labour, scanty or unwholesome diet. In the West Indies, and in the southern colonies of North America, they will be full of

of health and vigour, at those seasons when the whites are affected with fevers and agues, and have swollen legs and jaundiced faces. *But if the blacks are seized with slow fevers and dysenteries, is there any wonder in it, when we consider that milk and fresh meat they never taste."*

I beg to be permitted a candid examination of the assertions contained in the foregoing paragraph; first observing, that, if negroes are not incommoded with the heat, they are much better adapted to the cultivation of the lands in the West Indies than white people, who certainly are. That negroes are not so liable to the disorders of warm climates, as the whites, I cannot allow. The lepra Grecorum, the lepra Arabum, the yaws, the black scurvy, a species of the King's evil, are all disorders of warm climates, with which the whites are no where affected. (At Barbadoes indeed, a species of that frightful disorder the Elephantiasis is not uncommon, even among the most opulent and respectable white inhabitants, as well as amongst the negroes, both male and female. These disorders the negroes bring with them from Africa to the islands; as far as my observation extends, none of these disorders, except the yaws, are contagious, and therefore it is very rare to find even any of the creole negroes affected with any other of them. With respect to the other disorders of warm climates, fevers and agues, swelled legs and jaundiced faces,—you acknowledge the whites are affected with them, when the negroes are full of health and vigour. You imply strongly, also, that those disorders are occasioned by scanty and unwholesome diet, and from the blood being impoverished by extreme labour.

In this representation of facts, I intirely agree with you; but what conclusion will every man of candour and common sense draw from these premises? That the negroes are well nourished with plenty of wholesome food, and that their labour is moderate; but that, on the contrary, the whites are obliged to labour above their strength, and have neither a sufficient quantity of food, nor of a good quality. That the fact is so, let any one, who has ever been at Barbadoes, determine. The number of poor white people there, who are either unable, or unwilling, to work, exceed belief; and the miserable appearance they make, without shoes or stockings, with their ulcerated legs and jaundiced faces, sufficiently proves, how much their interest impels the people of that Island, to cherish and take care of their negroes, beyond what their humanity leads them to; to relieve the distresses of their poor helpless white neighbours. They really seem, from that part of their conduct, to have no more compassion, or humanity, than so many parish officers in England.

You insinuate, Sir, that the negroes, in Barbadoes, (for it is clear to me, from your letter, you have no knowledge of any other colony) are afflicted with slow fevers and dysenteries. I reply to the first part of the insinuation, that the fact is otherwise. They are very little subject to slow fevers: The fevers which most generally attack the negroes, in that island, are highly inflammatory,

They are indeed, sometimes, in the rainy season, affected with dysenteries and other putrid disorders; owing, as well to the state of the atmosphere, at that season, as to the irregularity of the negroes lives.

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Nothing will, at any time, restrain them from pursuing their amours, or their amusements : Dancing they are passionately fond of ; and they will travel several miles, after their daily labour is over, to a dance ; and after dancing the greatest part of the night, they will return to their owners plantations, and be in the field at the usual hour of labour. They regard neither rains nor bad roads, which are common at that time of the year. Every person who knows the nature of the West India climate, the violent exercise of negro dancing, and the repose which nature requires after fatigue, will cease to wonder that such nocturnal excursions, in bad weather, should occasion a stoppage of perspiration, and bring on dysenteries and other fatal disorders. Would it not be more reasonable and candid to impute those maladies to such irregularities, rather than to the negroes "*never tasting milk and fresh meat,*" even if they really were entirely deprived of those enjoyments ? But, I boldly affirm, the fact is otherwise.

It is inconceivable to me that any gentleman should have resided in Barbadoes, though but for a very short time, and be ignorant of what is so extremely notorious,—That, in none of the other colonies have the negroes nearly the same abundance of poultry, such numbers of goats, kids, and hogs, as those in Barbadoes ; † nor do they, any where, make such expensive feasts, particularly at funerals, and at the ceremony of throwing water, as they call it, on the graves of their friends and relations. At some of these entertainments, there

† Every Officer of the Navy and Army, who were in the West Indies during the last war, know, that the Fleet and Army were supplied with poultry, sheep, &c. from that island, at most reasonable rates.

there are more turkeys, capons, Guinea fowls, &c. than would suffice at a parish feast; nor are hams, tongues, and fish of different kinds, wanting to increase the good cheer; plenty of rum at least, and not unfrequently wine and porter, abound at these meetings.

Although I am willing to allow the Dean of Middleham may have forgotten the manner in which negroes assemble themselves together in Barbadoes, and the frequency of their entertainments, and has not therefore in this instance *willingly or knowingly exaggerated* facts, or given *false information*, yet, I cannot be so indulgent to him, in commenting upon the remaining part of the paragraph of this letter, where he describes the diet of the negroes. The marks of exaggeration are so strong, and so evident, that it is impossible they should escape the observation of any person whose imagination is not heated and prepossessed by the accounts which have been circulated of the inhuman and savage treatment the negroes receive in the West Indies.

“ Their food,” the Dean says, “ consists of maize, vegetables, and either a little *rancid salt-fish*, or, rarely, a small portion of salt beef, or salt pork, from Ireland, that is *of the worst quality the market affords*.” Can any person read this account and not remark that it is exaggerated in a malevolent degree? To say nothing of the low price of flying fish at Barbadoes (which are often caught in such abundance, as not only to be within the compass of the abilities of the negroes to purchase, but even the *poor white people* can afford to eat them,) supposing they had nothing to eat with their vegetables, but salt fish, why must that salt fish be

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rancid? It is notorious that many vessels go yearly from Barbadoes to Newfoundland for fish. As soon as they get their lading they return; and, as soon as they do return, they unload and sell their cargoes.

It cannot be presumed the ships stay at Newfoundland until the fish grow rancid, before they purchase their cargoes, even if they catch none of it themselves; neither will any person readily believe, that the merchant will keep his fish to grow *rancid*, before he sells it to the planter; or that the planter, when he has bought it, will keep it until it is spoiled before he gives it to his negroes. It is equally contrary to fact, to say the Irish provisions given to the negroes, are of the worst quality the market affords. I must beg leave to ask the Dean of Middleham, whether he means the Irish, or the Barbadoes market? If the former, there is not a merchant in London or Cork, but will contradict him. The worst Irish beef is never shipped to the *British* sugar islands. If the Barbadoes market is alluded to, perhaps, the poorer people, who are obliged to purchase it in the island, buy the cheapest kind there is for sale, on account of their inability to pay for better, yet even that, which is the lowest priced beef for sale, is what is called *common cargo beef*, which is not by several degrees the most inferior.

But it is well known that the beef ordered by the planters, and shipped from Ireland by their correspondents, is of the most superior quality, and is from that circumstance denominated and branded on the head of the casks, *mess beef*, by way of pre-eminence. There is much less difference in pork than in beef, and the former is more commonly given to the negroes than

than the latter. The quality of *cargo pork*, and *mess pork*, the only different descriptions of that article of commerce, is the same; in the former, the whole carcass is packed in the barrel; in the latter, the heads, necks and shanks, are omitted.

The Dean goes on to speak of their drink, "which is commonly water from ponds, occasionally with a little rum in it." Is not the same unfortunate bias towards abusing the planter manifested in this, as in the former description? can any reason be assigned, or will any body credit, that the planter should forbid his negro to quench his thirst with well, spring, or rain water, when he can get it, and oblige poor Tom to drink "the green mantle of the standing pool?" I think I may venture to say that no one will believe the negroes commonly drink *pond* water, but where better is not to be had, which may be the case in some situations, and at some times of the year, in Barbadoes and Antigua; but in Granada, St. Vincents, Dominica, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, and the greatest part of Jamaica, the negroes could scarcely find pond water, if they were to seek for it.

The Dean, however, allows that, whatever be the water the negroes drink, they occasionally have a little rum in it. I hope I may be at liberty to expound this assertion of the Dean, in such a manner, as will render it consistent with truth, and not do him so much discredit, as if it was construed more consistently with the other parts of his declamation. I will therefore suppose the Dean means, that they have as much rum given them in their water, as they have any occasion for; and really that is generally the fact.

The Dean's zeal for the slaves, or rather his enmity to the planters, is manifest in that part of his accusation, which shews that they merit praise, where he bestows his censure;—he says, “ in the rainy season, the negroes are not *always* withdrawn from their labour to shelter.” The very terms of the accusation shew they *generally* are—If the charge was more pointed, I should only have to urge, that as the preservation of the health of his negroes, is the most essential object of the planter's care, who has any regard for his own interest, there cannot be a reasonable apprehension that he will not attend to it.

I shall leave it to the Dean himself, to settle his account with the planters of his native island, for the character he gives of them as “ guilty of extravagancies in England, and riotous living in their own country, of having passions upon which there is no check in law, in favour of the negroes, for whose murder, if the property is invested in the murderer, they are not accountable to the magistrate, and who being confirmed in habit, inflexible in obstinacy, and rooted in prejudice, are unwilling to try the effect of a lenient and novel system.”—I must, however, beg leave to assert, from my knowledge of many of the inhabitants in almost all the West India islands, Barbadoes not excepted, that a lenient system is not a novel one, and that, amongst the same number of gentlemen in England, or any other part of the British dominions, there will not be found a greater number of men of better education, of more enlarged ideas, of more charitable, humane, dispositions, or, in short, more diligent, sober, valuable and industrious citizens, or deserving better of their country, than do the planters inhabiting
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the West India islands; add to this, that they are universally allowed to be a brave, generous people, and so attached to their fellow subjects of Great-Britain and Ireland, that their houses, and their tables are constantly open to, and their horses, servants, and carriages, at the call of, such gentlemen, as business or curiosity lead to visit the colonies, even although they should have but the slightest introduction to them, or no other knowledge of them than, perhaps, their bearing his Majesty's commission; and I am happy now, that I am on the point of leaving these islands, to have so good an opportunity of bearing this testimony to their worth.

I have heard it observed that, heretofore, the slaves in the colonies were treated with more severity than at present. There were then fewer natives, and the unhealthiness of the climate deterred more people, who could live in Europe, from visiting the islands, than venture at present, when the country, from cultivation, is become much less fatal. The scarcity, therefore, of white inhabitants, formerly, in a manner, obliged the planters to accept the fatal present which the *humanity* of the Mother Country presented to them, of the outcasts of their gaols, or of the dissipated, drunken and vicious youth, whose parents sent them over to the islands to save them from immediate disgrace or destruction. The humane and compassionate dispositions of the planters, often combined with the want of worthier subjects, to lead them to confide their negroes to such unprincipled and unfeeling miscreants, as many of them proved, and their behaviour has at different times brought unmerited censure on the proprietors, who have, perhaps, been entirely ignorant of the ill-treatment

treatment their slaves have received, and the consequent injury their fortunes and properties have sustained, from the men to whom they have given the bread they were not thought worthy to eat in the land of their nativity.

But what can induce the Dean to assert that the white people are unwilling to admit their slaves to the privileges of Christianity? Why does he appeal to the venerable Society for propagating the Gospel for their testimony, in proof of that assertion? I am confident *that* society, of which I have had the honour to be a member, cannot support him upon this occasion—They have a right to direct how their estates shall be conducted, and, it is not to be doubted, they have taken such steps to convert their slaves as they judged most efficacious. If their endeavours for that purpose have hitherto been ineffectual, is there not reason to fear, it must be imputed, not so much to the unwillingness of the masters of the slaves, as to the want of diligence and zeal, in those who are appointed their instructors. The society's estates have, I know, for some years past, been particularly under the direction of a *West India* gentleman, who has, in a most noble and disinterested manner, given his attention to their improvement; who has engaged, at all events, to pay them a certain rent; and every profit he could make of them besides, I know, he intended for them, and dare say he has given to them. Those who know that gentleman, will not doubt his zeal as a Christian, or his humanity as a man. Was he himself resident in the island, probably, his endeavours might be more successful than, perhaps, they have been, in promoting the conversion of the negroes of those estates. That
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the proprietors of slaves are willing to have them instructed, and that the people themselves are capable of instruction, is clear from what has happened within these few years at Antigua, where, from the diligence and apostolic zeal and perseverance of the clergymen of the Moravian church, many thousands of negroes are found amongst their humble auditors, well instructed and baptized, and many hundred communicants are constant attendants at the Lord's Table. So far are the inhabitants from being displeased at their conversion, that, I am well informed, 20 to 30 per cent. more is given for a Christian, than an unconverted slave, equally valuable in other respects. Application has been made, to my certain knowledge, to the brethren from some of the other islands to send them clergymen to instruct their negroes; and I know more than one gentleman who has offered to be at the expence of building such pastor a commodious house, and attaching a parcel of land to it, for his accommodation. These gentlemen are now enlarging the circle of their labours; they are settled in Barbadoes, St. Cruz, this, and other islands, and their success is not to be doubted. But can it be wondered at, when people are ordained priests and sent to the West Indies, whose characters were before, not only despicable, but, some of them, infamous, which we know has been the case; people should not have been desirous of such persons attempting the conversion of their negroes, even if they should request it, which is not probable.

I would not be understood to throw a censure upon any particular person, and, therefore, I forbear pointing out those instances which are however well known

amongst us ; but I beg leave to add, that there is not at present so much reason for complaint as heretofore; many of the clerical gentlemen, now in the West Indies, being men of worth and character. Still, however, it is to be feared there are some who have sought to be put into the priest's office, merely *that they may eat a morsel of bread.*

I have already assigned some of the causes to which the annual diminution of the negroes, in the colonies, may be attributed, viz. the smaller comparative number of females imported than males, the promiscuous amours of the females (not as it is imagined, by some people, from a libidinous disposition, as they sell their favours at a high rate, both to their negro and white paramours) and to the mothers suckling their children longer than necessary, scarce any of them being to be prevailed on to wean their children before they are two or three years old; another reason is the unhealthiness attending the establishment of new settlements.—The curse of God, that “*man shall eat his bread by the sweat of his brow,*” is particularly manifested upon such occasions; disease and sorrow are his companions, until the ground is fully cultivated. But I cannot allow the negroes in Barbadoes are lessened in the proportion the Dean alleges—He says, that the white inhabitants are diminished one half since my Lord Clarendon's time; that may, for ought I know, be true, and partly owing to their migrations; but, that the blacks are stationary, I more than doubt. Great numbers of negroes have, heretofore, deserted from Barbadoes to St. Vincents, many were carried to Guadaloupe, Martinique, and to the Havanna, when the conquest of those islands was achieved, the war before last. For many years together,

ther, owing to the bad crops in that island, great numbers have been sold, or sent off to the Dutch settlements upon the Continent, which owe many of their white inhabitants also to Barbadoes, who have always carried off with them as many of their slaves as they could ; others have been sent to the islands of St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago, as well as to the French islands of St. Lucia, Martinique, and Guadaloupe, and, until within these three or four years, that Barbadoes has been again blessed with seasonable weather, and the inhabitants enriched by abundant crops, both of sugar and cotton, very few of the negroes, imported into that island, were purchased by the inhabitants for their own use, but have been bought either by the merchants there, or strangers, and sent off to the neighbouring English, as well as foreign islands. I do not, therefore, believe there has been any thing like the diminution of the number of slaves supposed by the Dean ; on the contrary, I am inclined to believe, in most old settled estates, both in that and the other islands, where a due proportion of females has been purchased, that, generally, there has not been any diminution, but rather an increase ; least of all will I allow, that such extraordinary diminution, if it has happened, has been occasioned by bad treatment : on the contrary, I have shewn, from the Dean's own account, that they are much better treated at Barbadoes than the whites.

I have already acknowledged, that sometimes they are not so well used by their overseers as could be wished ; when such misbehaviour in an overseer is discovered, he is turned away, and, probably, will not soon find another employ ; but it is much to be wished, that the proprietors, particularly the more wealthy of them,

resided more constantly upon their estates than they do.

I fear I have by this time pretty well tired my reader, and particularly the Dean of Middleham, if he has done me the honor to attend to me thus far; but, I must still request a little indulgence, while I offer a word or two in favour of the merchant whom the Dean makes answerable for all the blood spilt in the wars amongst the negroes in Africa, and for all the other calamities so pathetically described by him as consequent on those wars; “the sufferings of the captives, whose tender attachments are broken, and the cruelties they endure, under a rigid task-master, when sold for slaves.”

We are told, when Africa was first discovered by the Portuguese, that amongst the several nations of it some were at war with others—we have never yet discovered any country the inhabitants of which were not frequently at war with those of their vicinity: in North America we found nations warring against nations, and some who had absolutely exterminated those they had fought against—amongst other particulars of the history of Africa, we learn of the dreadful irruption made from the southern part of that continent by a savage nation, called *Gigas*, who murdered all the adults, and preserved only nubile females and infant males, and actually sold the flesh of the female infants, and other of their vanquished enemies, in the public shambles. The terror spread by these abominable miscreants extended over the greatest part of the continent, from the Atlantic to the Indian ocean. There is not the least doubt of the general truth of the fact, though, perhaps, we may not believe

believe every horrid particular told us of these people. They are now dispersed and no longer exist as a nation, but some of these cannibals still live amongst the other tribes upon the coast, and I myself remember seeing two of them, who were convicted of murdering and devouring one of their fellow slaves, executed for it at Antigua, in the year 1769, or 1770*. It is not to be doubted, therefore, that there are wars amongst savage as well as among civilized nations, and ever will be, even if the persons taken in such wars are not sold for slaves, nor the wars undertaken for the purpose of making prisoners, unless to put them to death.

It is well known that, at the time of the Portuguese discoveries, about the middle of the fifteenth century, slaves were an established article of the inland commerce of the people of Africa; and, even so late as 1730, Snelgrave tells us he bought a child for a bunch of beads, worth no more than half a crown†; at present the price upon the Gold Coast is near 30l. upon an average, for a prime negro slave of about sixteen or eighteen years of age. Does not the Dean imagine "that the idol of self-interest, to whom humanity is stabbed as a sacrifice," may have occasioned the slaves in Africa, (I do not mean those taken in war, but those born and bred in their families) to be more attentively cherished, now they are so valuable, than when they were not worth more than 2s. 6d. a head?

* These negroes belonged to, and had then lately been purchased out of a cargo of Ebo slaves, by the late Robert Christian, Esq; of that island.

† Vide Long's History of Jamaica, Book 3, vol. 3, page 387.

—Is it probable that a king, or petit prince, in Africa, will be so ready to go to war now, in order to take captives, when he must risque the lives of so many of the slaves he has already, for the precarious chance of procuring more?

Is it to be imagined there will be so many sacrificed as heretofore, at the funerals of their deceased masters, in order to attend their *manes*? Their sons or heirs will, it is to be imagined, think it prudent, for the deceased, not to expect so many people to wait on them in the other world, as they used to have. It is not, therefore, by any means clear, that the Slave Trade, as it is called, occasions any of the calamities said to arise from it *in Africa*; if it did, the stopping it by Great-Britain would only enable our commercial rivals to carry it on to greater advantage. It is even probable, that since the Europeans have become purchasers of slaves, and thereby so greatly enhanced their value, that their lot is ameliorated; and that there being so advantageous a vent for them, must have saved the lives of thousands, who would otherwise have been put to death for very trivial offences.

The consideration of these circumstances will, I hope, enable the Dean of Middleham to hear of a turtle feast, in future, with less horror, although the humanity of his nature may not let him partake of it; and I hope he will be enabled to proceed in his prayers, or in his sermon at church, even if he should see the daughter of a *master of a ship* there, in a silk gown, or a muslin apron ||.

I hope

I hope the Dean will forgive me, that I have taken the liberty to call the commander of a Guinea ship the *master* rather than the *skipper* of a vessel. Is it right, that the Dean's indignation against the Slave Trade should make him apply to another country for a term of reproach, by which to describe the master of a ship; for the Dutch appellation of skipper, has a very contemptuous sound to an English ear.

The Dean tells us, the Christian cannot countenance this trade, because his Bible shews him that man-stealers are classed with "*murderers of fathers and mothers, and perjured persons.*" Let any one refer to the text, quoted by the reverend Dean, and then determine whether it has any the remotest relation to the Slave Trade? I will beg leave to recite it at large, and then I will request the Dean to re-consider it, and apply such part to the subject in dispute, or to *himself*, as he may conceive expedient and just.

"Now the end of the commandment is *Charity*. 1st Tim. chap. 1. verse 5. "*from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling; desirous of being teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly, and for sinners, for unholy, and for profane, for *murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers*, for man-slayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for man-stealers, *for lyars*, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine." *Verse 6 to 11.*

Now I must beg leave to ask the Dean, when the Bible is in every one's hand, how he could quote this passage in the manner he has done, as a proof of the injustice of the Slave Trade? I remember to have heard of a priest in former times who quoted a passage from one of the Prophets, to shew that he, as rector of the parish, was not obliged to repair the chancel, the pavement of which wanted re-laying. The passage he quoted from the Latin Bible was, "*Paveant illi! non paveam ego, inquit Dominus,*" which he Englished thus, "Let them *pave*, for I will not *pave*, saith the Lord!" As none of his parishioners understood Latin, and the Bible was not then translated into the vulgar tongue, the Rector carried his point.

There is one passage in the Dean's letter, I have omitted to notice, to wit, that the inhabitants of the islands object to the conversion of their slaves "upon pleas, which, if admitted originally, would have annihilated Christianity, on its first appearance."

I cannot say, I comprehend what is intended by that passage in the Dean's letter, unless he means, that a slave, if he became a convert, could not be detained in bondage by his master, if *he* was a Christian also. If such be his meaning, I hope he will pardon me for endeavouring to convince him, that he is mistaken in that point; and to that end, I beg leave to quote the extract of a letter from one of the earliest and best Christians to another, who he himself had converted from Paganism. He will also, I hope, excuse my modernizing the language, assuring him, I will not wilfully or knowingly, alter the sense. It is without date as to time, but was written from Rome.

" My

" My dear friend, and fellow labourer,

" After the inestimable service I have rendered you,"
(i. e. by converting him,) " I think I might venture to
lay claim as a right to that, which, however, I had
rather consider myself as obliged to you for, as a matter
of favour. My request is, that you will pardon your
slave, who is the bearer of this letter, and who I have
converted since my imprisonment. Perhaps, you will
have no reason to regret his having run away from you,
as I am convinced he will never leave you any more.
I have, therefore, sent him back to you, requesting you
to receive him as a man I have the highest regard for.
I should have been extremely glad to have kept him to
wait on me, but I would not take such a liberty with-
out your permission. Perhaps, he ran away from you,
for a short time, in order that you may receive him
again for ever. I beg you will receive him, not as a
slave, but as a brother beloved, particularly by me; and,
if by me, much more by you, who have so much rea-
son to rejoice in his conversion, which secures his
eternal happiness at the same time that it insures you
his most faithful temporal services. If, therefore, you
consider me as in Christian fellowship, and communion
with you, I request you to receive him as myself. If
he has wronged you, or owes you any thing, you will
please to put the amount to my account, and I will most
certainly repay you : Notwithstanding, I may urge, that
you owe yourself to me.

" I hope soon to be with you, and beg you to prepare
a lodging for me; your friends ——— and ———
desire to be affectionately remembered to you, and
I am, &c."

I dare

I dare say many of my readers will discover, notwithstanding its modern dress, that the above letter was written by St. Paul to Philemon. I beg leave to ask, if such an epistle was written now, from one friend to another, could any person believe that the writer considered it lawful for one Christian to hold another in that bondage which we call slavery. If that had been St. Paul's opinion, would he not have told Philemon that he, being now a Christian, ought not to hold Onesimus in bondage, or would he have directed Titus to exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters? (*Epistle to Titus, chap. 2, verse 9.*) it cannot be said that such exhortations were made to Christian slaves, to be obedient to their Pagan masters, and that the Apostles considered themselves bound, not to disturb the established usages, or suffer their disciples to act in opposition to the laws of the countries under which they lived; because the contrary is evident, not only from the Epistle to Philemon, but also from *1st Timothy, chap. 6, verse 2, 3, 4, 5*, where the Apostle expressly enjoins the slaves of Christian masters, not to slacken their duty towards them, because they are brethren in Christ, but, on the contrary, to serve them with the greater diligence. This doctrine he directs Timothy "to teach and exhort," declaring that, "*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds; and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness†.*"

By

† The words in the original are δουλους ιδίοις δεσποταις αποτασσεται, that the word δουλους, translated Servants, means Slaves, is evident from

By what mode of reasoning, or what sophistry, the opponents of slavery and the slave trade will combat the plain and unequivocal proofs, produced both from the Old and New Testaments, in justification of that commerce, I am at a loss to guess: For my own part, I own I shall not easily be convinced, but, that as slavery always existed, from the earliest accounts we have, to the coming of Christ, so it has ever since been practised, and approved of, throughout Christendom. It is, perhaps, the best way *not to seek to be wise above what is written*. If the gentlemen, who have so lately thought proper to brand the commerce of buying and selling slaves with the titles of *accursed* and *infernal*, find no warrant in holy writ for thus daring to sit in the judgment-seat of God, reasonable men will, perhaps, pay but little regard to their sentences. Unless slavery had a much higher origin than is supposed by the writers on the laws of nations, Puffendorf, Grotius, &c. it certainly could not be admitted under the gospel

from 1st Cor. chap. 12, verse 13. Where that word is put in opposition to the word *ἐλευθεροί*, freemen, *ἢτε δούλοι, ἢτε ἐλευθεροί*, whether we be *bond* or *free*. Thus, also, in the 25th chap. of St. Matthew, verse 14. The kingdom of heaven is as a *Man* travelling into a far country, who called his *own servants*, *ἰδίους δούλους*, &c. and that such servants were in the absolute power of the Master, appears from verse 30. The same word is made use of Luke, chap. 17, and 7. Which of you having a servant, *δούλον*, &c. and verse 9. Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. That the word *δούλοι*, translated *servants*, means bond servants, is further evident from there being different words to express servants of a different nature, as *ἐργαται*, labourers. Matt. 20, verse 1. *μισθοί*, hired servants. Luke 15, verse 17. These are additional proofs that Slavery was not disapproved of, either by Christ, or his Apostles, and in usage, under the gospel dispensation:

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dispensation ;

dispensation ; because all war is by that law forbidden, and the precepts “ *resist not evil.* ” — “ *If a man smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other,* ” and the like, are plain and obvious commands which preclude all cavil. The rights, therefore, acquired by the conqueror over the vanquished, could never be the foundation of slavery amongst Christians, to whom all war is forbidden. — Without entering into a critical enquiry how, or when, or upon what account, persons were first made slaves ; it cannot be denied that such a condition of life always existed, and ever will exist, whatever name you may call it by, unless all men are reduced to a perfect equality of fortune. Necessity, the severest of task masters, forces the distressed poor in Great-Britain, who have numerous families, to labours, the half of which the stoutest slave in the West Indies would declare to be insupportable, and would sink under ; and what is worse, infants of the most tender age are obliged, in England, particularly, to earn their bread before they eat it, by employments, which, if not beyond their strength, are so injurious to their health, as to prevent their attaining to that portion of it, they might otherwise have enjoyed ; and not a few of them are a prey to diseases, and decrepitude at an age which is generally esteemed the prime of life, while numbers are cut off before they attain that period. If the two Universities would propose *Prize Medals* for the best dissertation on the evil effects which the manufactures of Birmingham, Manchester, and other great manufacturing towns, produce on the health and the lives of the poor people employed therein, it is not to be doubted but candidates would offer, who, having so much better a field to employ their talents in, would as far excel Mr. Clarkson’s pathetic declamation on the miseries of the negro slaves

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in the West-Indies, as, *reality exceeds fiction*. What horror might not an ingenious man excite in the mind of his reader, in describing two or three thousand fine, rosy checked children playing in the meads, enamelled with flowers, in all the luxuriance of health and happiness, “*drinking the spirit of the golden day,*” seized on by those baneful fiends, avarice and luxury, and placed together in the hot rooms of different manufactories, till the pestilential vapour, repeatedly enhaled, spreads contagion amongst them, and those of them who escape death, discovering every symptom of disease in their formerly beauteous and healthy countenances. What a high finished picture, worthy the pencil of Caracci, might not be sketched out, by the person who would enter the miserable hovels of the poor wretch, who, covered with filth, rags, and vermin, and writhing in the agonies which are consequent on diseases brought on by working in mercury, lead, &c. sees around him his puny, decrepid progeny, crying for that sustenance which his labour can no longer procure them, and adding to the bodily torments before scarcely supportable; while the poor unhappy partner of his misery, her limbs scarce able to support her enfeebled and emaciated body, is unable to determine to which object of her compassion she should first address her unavailing and useless endeavours to yield that assistance and comfort, which she is at last reluctantly obliged to solicit from the humanity of the parish officers,—“to shock us more, solicit it in vain.” Such pictures may be drawn from the life in a variety of the manufacturing towns of Great-Britain. Nor will painters, orators, or poets, ever have occasion to regret the want of similar objects whereon to exercise their genius, their talents, or their invention, until the Almighty shall please to

change the nature of mankind. While arts, manufactures, commerce, and navigation exist, while one man is allowed to appropriate to himself a larger portion of land than is necessary for his own subsistence, while one man's abilities of mind, or strength of body, is superior to that of another, so long will be the distinction of laborious and idle, rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed, lord and slave, master and servant, freedom and slavery, or a servitude full as severe. These things, and these conditions of life, must all exist or perish together. I even do not think we should have much to congratulate ourselves upon, if we were to see the return of those *Saturnia Regna*, that golden age, when people lived upon acorns and pig-nuts, and the other spontaneous productions of nature†.

But if, notwithstanding every thing which can be urged to the contrary, and the many claims on their humanity so much nearer to them, these islands, and the slavery of the negroes, are still to continue what the Humane Society in the Old Jewry, and the other petitioners, chuse to attend to in the first place, it is not to be doubted but that persons, who possess such a fund of zeal and humanity, and are desirous of regulating other people's conduct, *if not their own*, by the dictates of our holy religion, will not shew themselves entirely devoid of every principle of justice. They must, however, be so, if the planters are to be deprived of their property, or have it deteriorated without a full compensation being made them for whatever loss or damage they may sustain by the abolition of that trade, which has been promoted and encouraged by so many different
acts

† Aurea prima fata est ætas, &c.—Ovid's *Meta.* book i. v. 89 to 112.

acts of Parliament; under the sanction of which, and of Royal proclamations, and other public engagements, the inhabitants of the sugar colonies have been induced, from time to time, to risque their fortunes, their lives, and their healths, under all the disadvantages of climate in the Torrid Zone. These acts of Parliament, made by persons who may, perhaps, with reason, be considered to have been as wise, as humane, and as religious, as the peers and gentlemen who at present compose that august assembly, they consider as more than their *chartered rights*. They regard them as formal and indissoluble contracts and engagements entered into with them; which Great Britain cannot, without the utmost injustice, infringe, or in any essential point alter, repeal, or abrogate, unless with their consent.—Indeed so sensible has the British Parliament always been of the justice of preserving sacred the property of individuals, when the public convenience was thought to make an invasion of it necessary, that even when an alteration was made in the mode of carrying on the slave trade, by laying it entirely open, the slaves, forts, and effects of the African Company, were purchased by the public.—The inhabitants of the sugar colonies, it is to be hoped, are as much entitled to the justice of the nation as any other of his Majesty's subjects. It has been the custom of late to depreciate the consequence of the sugar colonies, and speak of them, as of much less importance to the commercial interests of the nation than they deserve. Amongst other people, a noble Lord, in his observations on the commerce of the American States, has been pleased to remark, "that the same revenue would arise on the importation of the same articles, as those which Great-Britain now receives from her West India islands, if they should
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come through the hands of the Danes, the Dutch, or the French ;” he justly observes, at the same time, “ that the great, he says, indeed the only national benefit Great Britain derives from that commerce, is from her navigation, her manufactures, and agriculture.” P. 152.

The very intimate knowledge, which in the course of the noble author’s observations, he appears to possess of the nature of commerce in general, and the just notions which he has of the importance of the navigation of Great Britain, and the best means to promote it, which enabled him so successfully to oppose the injudicious and ill-grounded apprehensions of some West-India planters and merchants, that they would be deprived of the commerce of America, unless it was permitted to the Americans to import the commodities the planters stand in need of, in American bottoms, gives me so high an opinion of his Lordship’s judgment, that it is with much diffidence I venture to dissent from him, and to beg him to reflect, that the revenue would scarcely receive equal benefit in the *latter*, as in the *former* case, because in the former, these articles are purchased chiefly with the manufactures of Great Britain ; in the latter, they must be paid for with money, which, perhaps, could not be found. At any rate the consumption would be very considerably diminished, and the revenue be proportionably less—neither do I conceive his Lordship will contend, that such benefit to the revenue arises solely from the duties paid on the productions of the islands, upon their importation ; but also on the duties paid on soap, candles, malt, beer, &c. consumed at home by the manufacturers who fabricate the commodities shipped to the colonies from
Great

Great Britain. Thus, if the consumer in Great Britain pays the duties charged on the commodities imported from the islands, the inhabitants of the islands, in like manner, pay the taxes charged on the landholder, peasant, manufacturer, or other artisan in Great Britain, as well for the produce of that country, as for such part of the produce of the West Indies, or any other part, which those persons consume who manufacture the merchandize shipped to the planters, and not only so, but the planter also pays the additional advance the manufacturer charges on his goods to indemnify him for the payment of such taxes and duties at home as he pays on what he consumes. Thus although, in some degree, the duties on sugar and rum may be said to be paid by the consumer, yet the whole must, at last, be paid by the consumer of the manufactures sent in their stead. In a word, it is land alone, or the produce of land, which must pay the whole of the taxes in every part of the *globe*. Those who cultivate the land, whether *bond* or *free*, must receive such part of the produce as is sufficient for their support and nourishment; more than that, they never do receive. —The public demands so much in the next place, as is adjudged necessary for the support of government; whether it is received in money, or in kind, matters not. The remainder is left to the owner of the soil, who must therewith pay the artisan, the manufacturer, or such other persons as minister to his necessities, his vanity, or his pleasures.

In proportion, therefore, to the value of the produce of the land of any country, that land is advantageous to the community. The value, therefore, of the West India colonies, ought to be estimated upon that scale,

and the further additional value of them will appear from what the noble author himself says, p. 162.

The justice of the observation last quoted, will, probably, upon reflection, induce the noble author to set a higher value *on the fee simple of the West India islands, and to consider the prodigious sums spent in forming sugar plantations, as well employed as they possibly could have been at home.* Page 154, " That considering the bulk of West India commodities, sugar, molasses and rum, particularly the former (his Lordship might have added cotton, coffee, and dye and cabinet woods, of various kinds) the universality of its extent and consumption, a consumption in its infancy, even in Europe, and still more so in America, it is not impossible that, in a few ages, the nation which may be in possession of the most extensive and best cultivated sugar islands, subject to proper policy, will take the lead at sea*."

Such a conviction, however, as his Lordship has, of the present real, and future probable, importance of the West India islands, will surely give the West India planters room to flatter themselves with the noble Lord's assistance, in opposition to the present attempt to reduce those islands to a state of absolute insignificance, by preventing their employing negroes in their cultivation, as well as to procure them that relief which he so judiciously points out the necessity of, by giving the importers of sugar the same advantages the importers of tobacco have by the late regulations; this, with the abolition of the patent offices, and some other obvious necessary arrangements, would do much towards enabling the British planters and merchants to support
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a competition with the French, Dutch, and other foreigners, at the American, as well as the European markets*.

But to return from a digression which, I hope, will not be considered wholly useless; or irrelevant to the claim which I have taken the liberty to make, in behalf of the planters, against Great Britain framing laws for the government of their slaves, or to abolish the trade, by which they are, in future, to be supplied with them,

* Amongst other regulations, that of appointing Councillors for life, or *quam die bene se gesserint*; and making them equally independent of the governors and of the people, would be of the utmost advantage; but if government should really be induced to relieve the West-India planters from the difficulties they labour under, they can do it in no manner so effectually as by changing the usage of granting offices to be held by patent; some of them, indeed might much better be totally suppressed, as the naval office, which was necessary when the Governors of the Colonies were Customers of the port, but which, since the appointment of Collectors and Comptrollers, is totally useless.—That of Provost Marshal, an office unknown to the civil constitution of Great-Britain, but which, in the Colonies, has usurped that of High Sheriff. The other patent offices, most of which respect the administration of justice—The Register in Chancery—Clerks of the Court, &c. if in the appointment of the Governor and Council, would, with the honourable independency before mentioned, render the place of Councillor so respectable, as, probably, to induce gentlemen of the principal fortunes in the islands to reside on their estates, to the equal advantage, not only of their own negroes, but to the slaves in general throughout the colonies. To them might be entrusted the regulation of fees of all these offices, with the Governor's approbation; for it is the fees of these patent offices, not the fees of the Custom-House, which are the causes of complaint. Can it be believed, as is asserted, that such fees amount to 200,000*l.* sterling per annum, in Jamaica only.

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I must

I must beg leave to observe, that laws in all countries are made, as it were, *pro re nata*. The atrocious mutilation of Sir John Coventry, gave rise to the act to punish those who should attack any persons with intent to maim them. Some enormities committed here, three or four years ago, by individuals, occasioned the act of assembly to be passed in this island last year, called "the consolidated slave act." This law provides for the punishment of those who shall mutilate any slave, and contains so many other good and salutary regulations, that, perhaps, if one other clause was added to it, which I remember constituted part of the law for the government of servants and slaves in the province of Maryland, there could scarcely be an addition necessary to insure the welfare and happiness of the negroes. —The law I allude to, is to the following effect: "That if any master or mistress, shall cruelly misuse, or ill-treat any slave belonging to him, or her, or willingly, or wittingly permit or suffer any overseer, book-keeper, or other person under whose direction or command such slave shall be placed, to misuse or ill-treat any such slave, such master or mistress, upon being duly convicted of such misbehaviour, before a proper tribunal, shall be obliged to sell or dispose of such slave, &c. by public outcry; and the money arising by the sale and disposal of such slave, if the said slave shall be mortgaged, after deducting the expence attending such conviction and sale, shall be paid to the mortgagee, or other creditor, by judgment, if any, according to the priority of their demands; and if none, to be disposed of in such manner as shall be judged proper by the makers of the law." That sometimes bad men treat their own slaves ill, cannot be denied, and it would be very satisfactory to every good man in the colonies, if

such people could, with propriety, be subjected, by law, to other punishment than they meet with from the injury they suffer in their property from the act itself. But the inhabitants of the West Indies are, surely, themselves more competent to decide how far such a law would be consistent with the subordination the negroes must be kept in, than people in Great Britain; who are certainly very incapable to regulate the internal police of these countries, neither can they judge of the manner in which slaves are treated, from the letter of the several laws made for their government.—Death and perpetual imprisonment are often the declared penalties of crimes which may be considered as not very enormous by people in Europe; but, as there is almost always added, *or such other punishment as the court shall think proper*, it is necessary to know what the sentences generally are, before it should be believed that the severer penalties are inflicted.—If people, in Jamaica, were to read the laws in Great Britain against the professors of the Romish religion, and believe they were put in execution, could they avoid considering the people of England as the most cruel and barbarous set of men in Europe? I hope what has been said will, at least, have so much weight with people at home, as to make them hesitate before they pass any laws by which the property of the planters may be very materially affected.

Still groaning, as those amongst them are, whose fortunes have escaped absolute destruction, for want of that protection and assistance which Great Britain was unable, in the late contest, with her now lost colonies, to afford them, they began to hope for better times; at least, they flattered themselves she had gained so

much wisdom, as to be doubtful of the truth of the accounts she received of what passed in her distant possessions. If those accounts heretofore given by the Governors and persons in the highest station in the North American provinces turned out to be erroneous, and to spring from passion or prejudice, are *such men* to be attended to, as have pretended to exclaim against the inhumanity with which the West Indians treat their negroes ! MEN, who either were charged with, or confess the acts of cruelty they accuse others of being guilty of, and who were actually despised and reprobated by their neighbours for their conduct—Yet upon such evidence alone, are the planters arraigned before the tribunal of the public, and scarce allowed to plead *not guilty*.

The Legislature of Great Britain, in the hour of her humiliation and penitence, passed a solemn act to assure her remaining colonists, that no taxes should ever be again imposed upon them, without their own consent ! Could the poor planters then believe they would, so soon after, be subjected to laws still more oppressive than any by which taxes could be imposed ; yet such will be their fate, if by any laws now to be passed, their slaves should be emancipated, or the slave trade be abolished : for the severest laws by which taxes are raised, can affect only a part of the subject's property ; but the present attempt, should it succeed, would destroy the whole. By endeavouring to raise money on, and coerce the North American colonies, by laws enacted without their participation or consent, Great Britain lost them. Yet the very people who were the loudest to clamour against governing people, and taking away or affecting their property, by laws
which

which they did not give, or refused their assent to, we are told, are the warmest advocates of the present plan: should it be executed, it will not be difficult to prophecy what will be the consequence—*Great-Britain will lose her islands, as she has lost the continent*; not perhaps in the same manner—the inhabitants of the islands are too feeble and disunited to resist.

If the slaves at present in the islands, are set free, their ruin will be immediate.—If the slave trade is abolished, their produce will in a few years be annihilated. The planter knows too well the impossibility of inducing white men to attempt supporting the labours of the field, in this part of the world, to consent to the experiment being tried at his expence. If the petitioners or the public, are willing to run the risque, the planters will not, I dare say, make any objections to it, but cede their property to be conducted according to any new mode which shall be adopted, on being paid a reasonable price for their property. Should such proposal be approved of, it may not be improper to state what will, probably, be the amount of the planters claims on the public.

It is generally believed that the number of negroes, and other slaves, in the several British sugar islands, are about 450,000, which, at 50l. ster. per head, amounts to 22,500,000
 The land they cultivate, with the buildings thereon, is moderately estimated at double the value of the slaves, - - - - - 45,000,000
 The land in wood, which in some of the islands government has sold for considerable sums of money, and which is particularly

cularly valuable for supplying timber for repairs of sugar works, mills, houses, &c. and which the present possessors have paid large sums for; houses in the towns, in the several islands, cattle, horses, mules, carts, &c. &c. will not be surely considered as estimated highly, at - - - 2,500,000

Total 70,000,000

The whole then will amount to the sum of about *seventy millions* sterling. It may be difficult for the public to find means, at this juncture, to raise so large a sum of money, especially as the abolition of the West India commerce, if the new plan of cultivation should fail, will occasion a very considerable diminution of the national revenues.—But *the wealth of this world is unworthy* the regard of such *pious men as our petitioners*; “*fiat justitia, ruat cælum*,” says the Dean of Middleham. If, however, when this matter comes to be debated in Parliament, the number of *worldly minded* people should form a majority considerable enough to stem the torrent of reform and *fanaticism*, which has diffused itself so widely, and induce the Parliament to let things run on in the old channel, till the neighbouring nations shall grow as *religious and humane* as ourselves—the Dean of Middleham, Mr. Glanville Sharpe, and the other petitioners, may still do their parts to put a stop to the slave trade.—Let them withdraw themselves from the support of such a wicked set of people as they consider these slave-holders to be.—Let them drink no rum, no sugar in their tea, consume no chocolate or coffee, eat no sweetmeats, tarts, or puddings, no currant jelly sauce to their venison,

nor

nor indulge themselves in eating any other cates into the composition of which sugar enters, unless they are convinced such sugar is of the growth, produce, or manufacture of *Cochin China*, where, the Dean says, it is prepared without any assistance from slaves. They may then rest satisfied they have done their part, in putting a stop to *the accursed and infernal traffick*, in their zeal against which, the mariner, the merchant, and the planter, three of the most valuable characters the community can boast of, are indiscriminately the objects of censure, abuse, and calumny. In the mean time, it will not be amiss if they reflect on an epitaph said to be engraven on the tomb of a Spanish gentleman, in one of the churches of Seville, which may be thus translated :

“ I was well, and wanted to be better ; so I took physic, —and died.”

F I N I S.

(78)

In a few Days will be published,

A N S W E R

TO THE

Rev. Mr. CLARKSON'S ESSAY

ON THE

SLAVERY AND COMMERCE

OF THE

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